United Nations E/CN.3/2012/16

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
16 December 2011

Original: English

Statistical Commission
Forty-third session
28 February-2 March 2012
Item 3 (m) of the provisional agenda*
Items for discussion and decision: efforts in developing a plan of action on statistical development

Report of the World Bank on efforts in developing a plan of action on statistical development

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its forty-first session (see E/2011/24, chap. I.B, decision 42/112), the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the World Bank on efforts in developing a plan of action on statistical development. The Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 29 November to 1 December 2011, considered and endorsed a programme of action for statistics. The objectives are: (a) to fully integrate statistics in decision-making; (b) to promote open access to statistics; and (c) to increase resources for statistical systems. This global action plan, known as the Busan Action Plan for Statistics, builds on the success of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics, which was endorsed by the Commission. To achieve its objectives, the Busan Action Plan outlines five steps needed to strengthen national statistical systems in developing countries and to increase the effectiveness of the support provided by development partners. As an important outcome of the Busan Forum, the Action Plan affirms the importance of establishing a global development partnership for improving national systems that produce reliable and openly available statistics to monitor progress, evaluate impact, ensure sound, results-focused public sector management and inform strategic decision-making. The Commission is invited to comment on the Action Plan's objectives and provide guidance on priorities.

* E/CN.3/2012/1.

11-64279 (E) 110112

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Report of the World Bank on efforts in developing a plan of action on statistical development

I. Introduction

1. At the Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 29 November to 1 December 2011, Heads of State, ministers and other representatives of developing and developed countries reaffirmed their commitment to effective international development. In doing so, they took note of the need for transparent, country-led and country-level results frameworks based on a manageable number of output and outcome indicators. In support of the broad objectives of greater transparency, accountability and sustainable results, the Forum received and endorsed a global action plan for statistics (see annex). This is the first time a statistical action plan has received explicit endorsement globally at the highest political levels. The Busan outcome document (para. 18 (c)) recorded the following commitment:[1]

> We will partner to implement a global Action Plan to enhance capacity for statistics to monitor progress, evaluate impact, ensure sound, results-focused public sector management, and highlight strategic issues for policy decisions.

2. The outcome document (para. 20 (a)) also noted the need for continuing improvements in gender statistics, by committing development partners to:

> Accelerate and deepen efforts to collect, disseminate, harmonize, and make full use of data disaggregated by sex to inform policy decisions and guide investments, ensuring in turn that public expenditures are targeted appropriately to benefit both women and men.

3. Statistical capacity was a theme that ran through the discussions of results and transparency at both the technical and political levels. The improvement of official statistics under the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics was widely noted. The endorsement of the Busan Action Plan for Statistics may be seen as an expression of confidence in the ability of the international statistical community to ensure the continuation of its progress in the future.

II. Past progress guided by the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics

4. The Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS) was an outcome of the Second International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results, held in Marrakech, Morocco, in 2004.[2] It was endorsed by the Commission at its thirty-fifth session.[3] In the Marrakech Action Plan, national and international statistical agencies and providers of development finance were called on to work together to strengthen official statistics in developing countries. Take-up was rapid and progress under the Marrakech Action Plan has been extensive. One of the first proposed

[1] See "Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation". Available from: www.aideffectiveness.org.

[2] Action plan available from: http://siteresources.worldbank.org.

[3] See the report of the Statistical Commission on its thirty-fifth session (E/2004/24).

actions was for Governments to develop national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDS). Seven years later, only 8 of 79 low-income International Development Association (IDA)-eligible countries do not have a national strategy and are not planning to prepare one. Implementation of these strategies is well under way in many countries.

5. The Marrakech Action Plan drew attention to the importance of the 2010 census round and mobilized resources to assist countries in planning and carrying out their censuses. After the 2010 census round concludes, 98 per cent of the world's population will have been counted. The Marrakech Action Plan also pointed out the need to improve the coverage and quality of indicators for the Millennium Development Goals. In 2003, only 4 countries (2 per cent) had two data points for 16 to 22 indicators; by 2006, this had improved to 104 countries (64 per cent), and to 118 countries (72 per cent) in 2009. Conversely, half of the countries had 10 or fewer indicators in 2003, while the figure dropped to just 11 per cent in 2009.[4] To improve the ability of national statistical offices to monitor their Millennium Development Goal targets using nationally produced statistics, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goal Indicators conducted a series of regional workshops and reports annually on progress.[5] To improve the quality and availability of household surveys, the International Household Survey Network was established. The Network has now catalogued over 4,000 surveys conducted in developing countries and provides standards and tools for recording and archiving survey results. The complementary Accelerated Data Program has assisted over 55 developing countries in improving their practices in data collection and management and dissemination of household surveys.

6. The partnership built around the Marrakech Action Plan has increased support for statistical capacity development. Since donors began reporting in 2008, financial commitments to statistics have increased by 60 per cent to $1.6 billion. Over this period, the quality of statistics, as measured by the World Bank statistical capacity indicator, improved from its benchmark level of 52 in 1999 to 68 in 2009. There has also been progress in developing results-oriented monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks. Another indicator of increasing statistical capacity is the substantial growth in the number of countries participating in the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS), which had reached 101 as at end October 2011. In December 2008, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved further enhancements to the System and supported recasting it to emphasize data dissemination and facilitate graduation to the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS), including through closer conformity with SDDS specifications.

7. An evaluation of the Marrakech Action Plan carried out in 2008 found that "MAPS broadly is focusing on things that remain of highest priority in the development of statistics for management of development in the poorer countries, and indications are that the MAPS partners, with their Bank counterparts, evolve their programs actively in light of new evidence about demand and about potentially viable solutions".[6] The 2008 evaluation cited examples of progress under all six

[4] Available from: www.paris21.org.

[5] See the report of the Secretary-General on development indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals (E/CN.3/2012/29).

[6] Christopher Willoughby and Philip Crook, "Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics: report of an independent evaluation" (2008), p. 26. Available from http://worldbank.org.

actions. The Marrakech Action Plan was also included in a global programme review conducted by the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group in 2010. The main findings concluded that "significant progress has been achieved in the primary objective of encouraging and supporting developing countries to design National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDSs), but only some progress has been made in NSDS implementation". The report also noted that statistical development has begun to receive a higher priority in national development programmes. But it cautioned that "statistical capacity building programs need to involve the users of statistics more actively".[7]

8. The implementation of the Marrakech Action Plan has been monitored and influenced by the global development community. In 2005, the Paris Declaration adopted the "the core principles put forward at the Marrakech Roundtable".[8] Subsequently, the Accra Agenda for Action made broad commitments on behalf of donors and developing countries to strengthen national statistical systems; provide more data disaggregated by sex, region and economic status; and "invest in strengthening developing countries' national statistical capacity and information systems, including those for managing aid".[9] More recently, the 2009 Dakar Declaration on the Development of Statistics reaffirmed that concerted and coordinated actions are required to make more effective use of statistical data to support poverty reduction policies and programmes and to strengthen and sustain the capacity of statistical systems, especially in developing countries. The recent review of the implementation of the Paris Declaration found substantial progress evidenced by the fact that "high-quality results-oriented frameworks to monitor progress against national development priorities are in place in one quarter of the developing countries first surveyed in 2005, with statistics related to the Millennium Development Goals becoming increasingly available".[10]

9. Experience since 2004 suggests the following lessons:

- Rapid progress is possible and there is strong uptake by developing countries for programmes to increase their statistical capacity. However, implementing national strategies is not always straightforward and the plans are often too ambitious. Maintaining core statistical activities while responding to the wider results agenda and new, emerging data needs of decision makers remains a challenge. Additional support is needed, especially in fragile States and small island developing States. Furthermore, the capacity to use statistical information remains weak and should be addressed as part of a larger, system-wide approach to capacity development.

- There is a growing demand for disaggregated statistics to monitor and evaluate programmes at the local level. However, sex-disaggregated statistics, needed to measure results and ensure that programmes and public expenditures are

[7] Independent Evaluation Group, "Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics: Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, and Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity", *Global Program Review*, Vol. 5, Issue 3 (2011), p. 58. Available from www.globalevaluations.org.

[8] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action" (Paris, OECD, 2008), p. 7. Available from www.oecd.org.

[9] Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[10] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Aid Effectiveness 2005-10: Progress in Implementing the Paris Declaration* (Paris, OECD, 2011), p. 16. Available from www.oecd.org.

appropriately targeted, are not systematically compiled or used; essential statistics on agricultural inputs and production are missing or outdated in a majority of developing countries; and few developing countries are equipped to manage large geographic information systems or to produce much-needed geocoded data.

- At the international level, coordination of donor support for statistical capacity development programmes remains imperfect. Despite the increased emphasis on monitoring and evaluation, many donor-financed projects fail to collect or preserve important statistical indicators. At the same time, new technologies are making possible innovative methods of collecting, storing and analysing data, requiring additional efforts towards creating international standards and methods for managing and disseminating large data sets.

III. Busan Action Plan for Statistics

10. The Action Plan presented at Busan builds on the success and implementation experience of the Marrakech Action Plan. It addresses the previously identified gaps and the expanding agenda of official statistics in areas such as gender statistics and geographic information systems. The Action Plan benefited from the following significant consultations with both the international statistical community and other development actors in advance of its consideration by the delegates of the High-level Forum:

- June 2011: initial consultations with members of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) Executive Committee; the meeting of the Global Partnership on Country Systems in Manila; and meetings with representatives of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Committee on Statistics and the Conference of European Statisticians in Geneva.

- July-August 2011: a second round of consultations was conducted during the International Statistical Institute (ISI) satellite conference on statistical capacity-building in Krakow, Poland; the ISI 2011 Statistics Congress in Dublin; and the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities round table in Luxembourg. In addition, the Action Plan was presented to experts in gender statistics of the Government of the United States of America, OECD, Statistics Division and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

- September-October 2011: additional consultations were held with results experts at a pre-Busan results workshop in Berlin and with national statisticians at the International Forum on Monitoring National Development in Beijing. The Action Plan was also posted on the PARIS21 website, which provided Board members and other interested parties with the opportunity to suggest revisions, and discussed by the Interagency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics.

11. The Action Plan proposes five priority areas for action that are likely to produce large and sustainable improvements in statistical capacity. In each case, programmes of action should be accompanied by indicators to monitor progress and measure results. Like the Marrakech Action Plan, the Busan Action Plan recognizes

the complementary roles of developing countries, bilateral development partners and international agencies. It encourages a coordinated system-wide approach to capacity development. Aid aligned with countries' statistical development strategies will be more effective than ad hoc, donor-initiated capacity development and data-collection efforts. Improvements in country statistical systems will further improve international statistics, while a more effective international system will provide more consistent advice and better support for national activities. The five priority areas are:

- **Action 1**. Strengthen and refocus national and regional statistical strategies with particular emphasis on improving statistical systems that address country-level development priorities. A key aim is to increase in-country capacity to respond to emerging and unforeseen needs. Strategies should be updated to reflect new challenges and opportunities and integrate international and domestic data-collection activities.

- **Action 2**. Implement standards for data preservation, documentation and dissemination that permit broader public access to statistics.

- **Action 3**. Develop programmes to increase the knowledge and skills needed to use statistics effectively for planning, analysis, monitoring and evaluation, thus increasing transparency and accountability, and improve accessibility of statistics at the national and international levels.

- **Action 4**. Build and maintain results-monitoring instruments to track the outcomes of all global summits and high-level forums. Rigorous monitoring of global initiatives requires collaboration between national and international statistical organizations. Outcome documents should specifically recognize the need for statistical capacity development, including technical assistance, training and financial support.

- **Action 5**. Ensure that financing for statistical information is robust and that funding instruments and approaches reflect the new modalities and actors in development finance.

12. The recommended actions serve to advance the goal of a statistical system that produces high-quality statistics of relevance to policymakers that are accessible to citizens and are sustainable with the resources available domestically and, where needed, from external sources. The success of the Action Plan should therefore be assessed by progress towards its overall objectives:

- **Fully integrate statistics in decision-making**. To break the cycle of poor-quality statistics leading to their underuse, which in turn leads to neglect and underfunding of statistical activities, statistical offices should be routinely engaged in planning, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation processes so that the statistics they produce are relevant and meet user priorities.

- **Promote wider and open access to statistics**. Timely and reliable statistics should be widely available to the public as well as to policymakers and other stakeholders, thus increasing Government effectiveness and public confidence.

- **Increase resources for statistical systems**. Continued investment is a key to breaking the vicious cycle of neglect and disuse of statistics. Financial support for national statistical systems should be integrated in development assistance programmes, with developing countries providing in-country leadership.

Donors should adopt system-wide approaches, coordinating their assistance strategies to ensure they are consistent with national priorities. But Governments should also demonstrate commitment to their statistical systems by appropriating adequate resources.

IV. Next steps

13. Implementing the Action Plan will require substantial effort and investment across the range of development actors, with developing countries playing an important leadership role. Implementation steps will recognize that fragile States and small island developing States have special needs and may require different, perhaps phased, approaches to capacity development and institution-building. Implementation will also reflect the increasing diversity of development partnerships in terms of financial support, knowledge exchange and sources of technical advice. Implementation will adhere to the following criteria:

- Broad international support exists and a lead agency/partnership/institution can be identified to support in-country leadership of national implementation strategies
- In-country capacity development is the primary focus (not building international bureaucracies)
- Outcomes are identifiable, monitorable and time-bound (indicative indicators to track implementation progress are provided)
- Implementation is "bureaucracy-light" and will rely on existing partnerships, agencies and institutions

14. PARIS21 and the World Bank will prepare an implementation plan and coordinate the next steps and work with the relevant agencies to ensure that accountabilities are determined and monitorable progress indicators are established. Progress will be reported through the proposed global partnership for effective development cooperation, starting with the meeting of the OECD Working Party on Aid Effectiveness in June 2012.[11] The Statistical Commission will play an important role in ensuring that this work remains a priority for the statistical community. As such, the Commission will receive biennial progress reports for its consideration.

V. Points for action by the Commission

15. **The Commission is invited:**

(a) **To comment on the Action Plan's objectives;**

(b) **To provide guidance on priorities.**

16. **The Commission may wish to identify opportunities for rapid implementation, measurable results and funding modalities.**

[11] See "Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation", para. 36.

Annex

Statistics for transparency, accountability and results: Busan Action Plan for Statistics

(Prepared for the Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Busan, Republic of Korea, 30 November-2 December 2011)

Executive summary

1. As the world community faces a complex array of challenges, policymakers need better statistics.

2. Statistics provide the evidence needed to improve decision-making, document results and heighten public accountability. The demand for improved statistics to monitor the Millennium Development Goals and the parallel effort to support a culture of results-based management has stimulated a decade-long effort to improve statistics. The results have been impressive but much work remains to be done.

3. This five-point Action Plan provides the direction for the decade ahead. It supports three principal objectives: (a) fully integrating statistics in decision-making; (b) promoting open access to statistics; and (c) increasing resources for statistical systems.

4. The Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness offered an opportunity to form a partnership to implement this Action Plan. As a result, partner-country statistical offices will be better able to highlight strategic issues for policy decisions, monitor progress, evaluate impact and ensure results-focused public sector management.

5. While maintaining the partner country-led approach of past efforts guided by the 2004 Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics, the Busan Action Plan goes beyond the Marrakech Action Plan in many ways. It adopts a system-wide approach to capacity development in order to integrate national statistical activities with the requirements of planning, budgeting, monitoring and results. It recognizes the important synergies between survey and census-based data, administrative data and vital statistics. The Action Plan also explicitly supports greater transparency and encourages the use of new methods and technologies to increase the reliability and accessibility of statistics.

6. The Action Plan explicitly recognizes the statistical activities necessary to support key global commitments including with respect to initiatives such as gender equity and the empowerment of women (see appendix for a sample list of statistical programmes responding to emerging global initiatives).

7. The Action Plan will require substantial effort and investment across the range of development actors. While it establishes priorities, it must still be translated into a set of time-bound and monitorable tasks. Implementation should be "bureaucracy-light", relying on existing partnerships, agencies and institutions. Financial support will come primarily from domestic revenues but donor support remains essential and new sources of financial assistance will be sought to supplement existing ones. The full engagement of international bodies will be crucial, especially forums that

bring together national and international experts to exchange knowledge and solve problems.

Policymakers need better statistics

8. **Reliable and accessible statistics provide the evidence needed to improve decision-making, document results and heighten public accountability**. As the world community faces a complex array of challenges, policymakers need better statistics. Ongoing global economic and financial challenges have demonstrated the need for timely, high-quality macroeconomic and financial data. Rising food prices have differential impacts on consumers and producers that can be only understood through integrated statistics on household consumption, agricultural production and trade. Health programmes for communicable and non-communicable diseases similarly require administrative data from the health system combined with data obtained from vital registration household surveys. Further, new initiatives to address gender equality and opportunities for women will require innovative methods of data collection and analysis.

9. The demand for improved statistics to monitor the Millennium Development Goals and the parallel effort to foster a culture of results-based management so as to increase development effectiveness has stimulated a decade-long effort to improve statistics. The results have been impressive but much work remains to be done.

The need is urgent because many gaps remain

10. **Africa may never know the impact of the global financial crisis on its poorest citizens**. Only 17 sub-Saharan African countries have collected data to measure changes in poverty in the past decade and 47 per cent of those countries have not carried out a household income or expenditure survey in more than five years.

11. **Without better statistics, opportunities for designing and implementing programme policies to improve gender equality and increase women's empowerment are constrained**. Between 2005 and 2009, 71 (out of 145) countries did not report data on the share of women in non-agricultural wage work, a Millennium Development Goal 3 indicator. Indicators of female entrepreneurship remain underdeveloped.

12. **Actions to improve food security require better and more up-to-date statistics**. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the quantity and quality of agricultural statistics coming from national statistical offices have been on a steady decline since the early 1980s, particularly in Africa, and official submissions from countries in Africa are at their lowest level since before 1961, with only one in four African countries reporting basic crop production data.

13. **Statistics are a matter of life and death**. In 2009, the births of 50 million children went unrecorded. They entered the world with no proof of age, citizenship or parentage. That same year, 40 million people died unnoted except by family or friends. There are no records of where they died, when they died and, more importantly, how they died. In most high-income countries, these vital events (births

and deaths) are recorded by civil registration systems, which also record marriages, adoptions and divorces; but in many developing countries, registration systems are incomplete or absent. In South Asia, only 1 per cent of the population is covered by complete vital registration records and in sub-Saharan Africa only 2 per cent (United Nations, *Population and Vital Statistics Report*, 2011). Lacking effective registration systems, countries must rely on infrequent and expensive surveys to estimate the vital statistics needed to support the core functions of Government and to plan for the future. More often, key policy decisions are made in the absence of reliable data.

Improvements will build on past successes

14. **The need for better statistics to design, monitor and assess development programmes was recognized at the First International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results in 2002**. The Second Roundtable, held in Marrakech, Morocco, in 2004 endorsed the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics, establishing an international agenda for supporting statistics in developing countries. The following year, the Paris Declaration adopted the "the core principles put forward at the Marrakech Roundtable on Managing for Development Results".[a] Subsequently, the Accra Agenda for Action made broad commitments on behalf of donors and developing countries to strengthen national statistical systems; provide more data disaggregated by sex, region and economic status; and "invest in strengthening developing countries' national statistical capacity and information systems, including those for managing aid".[b] More recently, the 2009 Dakar Declaration on the Development of Statistics reaffirmed that concerted and coordinated actions are required to make more effective use of statistical data to support poverty reduction policies and programmes and to strengthen and sustain the capacity of statistical systems, especially in developing countries.

15. The Marrakech Action Plan recommended six "short- and medium-term actions consistent with long-term, sustainable improvements in national and international statistical capacity".[c] Recognizing the essential partnership between national and international institutions, the actions were divided into those addressing national needs and a second set of actions addressing international responsibilities. Resources to support implementation of the Marrakech Action Plan came from bilateral and multilateral donors and from national budgets.

16. **Much progress has been made**. Out of the 79 low-income IDA countries, only 8 countries do not have a national strategy for the development of statistics and are not planning to prepare one. Implementing these strategies is well under way in many countries. After the 2010 census round concludes, 98 per cent of the world's population will have been counted. Since donors began reporting support for statistical capacity development in 2008, financial commitments to statistics have increased by 60 per cent to $1.6 billion over the period 2008-2010. Over 55 developing countries have improved their practices in data collection and

[a] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action" (Paris, OECD, 2008), p. 7. Available from www.oecd.org.

[b] Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[c] World Bank, "Better data for better results: an action plan for improving development statistics" (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2004), p. 1.

management, and dissemination of household surveys. The Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goal indicators conducted a series of regional workshops aimed at improving the monitoring of the Goals and reports annually on progress. Over this period, the quality of statistics, as measured by the World Bank's statistical capacity indicator, has improved from its benchmark level of 52 in 1999 to 68 in 2009; and there has been progress in developing results-oriented monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

17. **Evaluations have confirmed the effectiveness of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics**. The "Progress since Paris" report found "substantial progress" was reflected by "more partner countries hav(ing) sound national development strategies in place, and these tend(ing) to be more clearly prioritized than in 2005" along "with evidence suggesting that MDG-related statistics are becoming increasingly available at the country level".[d] An evaluation of the Marrakech Action Plan carried out in 2008 found that "MAPS focused on topics that remain of highest priority in the development of statistics in the developing countries ... to create a strong framework for dealing with the multifaceted problems of statistical development in developing countries".[e] The Marrakech Action Plan was also included in a global programme review conducted by the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group in 2010. The main findings concluded that "significant progress has been achieved in the primary objective of encouraging and supporting developing countries to design National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDSs), but only some progress has been made in NSDS implementation". The report also noted that statistical development has begun to receive a higher priority in national development programmes. However, it cautioned that "statistical capacity building programs need to involve the users of statistics more actively".[f]

18. Experience since 2004 suggests the following lessons:

- Rapid progress is possible and there is strong uptake by developing countries for programmes to increase their statistical capacity.[g] Yet, implementing national strategies is not always straightforward and the plans are often too ambitious. Maintaining core statistical activities while responding to the wider results agenda and new, emerging data needs of decision makers remain a challenge. Additional support is needed, especially in fragile States and small island developing States. Furthermore, the capacity to use statistical information remains weak and should be addressed as part of a larger, system-wide approach to capacity development.

- There is growing demand for disaggregated statistics and for geocoded data needed to monitor and evaluate programmes at the local level. Yet,

[d] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Aid Effectiveness 2005-10: Progress in Implementing the Paris Declaration* (Paris, OECD, 2011).

[e] Independent Evaluation Group, "Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics: Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, and Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity", *Global Program Review*, Vol. 5, Issue 3 (2011), p. 22.

[f] Ibid., p. 58.

[g] An indicator of this increase in statistical capacity is the substantial growth in the number of countries participating in the General Data Dissemination System, reaching 101 as at end October 2011. In December 2008, the IMF Executive Board decision favoured further enhancements to GDDS and supported recasting it to emphasize data dissemination and facilitate graduation to the Special Data Dissemination Standard, including through closer conformity to SDDS specifications.

sex-disaggregated statistics, needed to measure results and ensure that programmes and public expenditures are appropriately targeted, are not systematically compiled or used; essential statistics on agricultural inputs and production are missing or outdated in a majority of developing countries; and few developing countries are equipped to manage large geospatial information systems.

- At the international level, coordination of donor support for statistical capacity development programmes remains imperfect. Despite the increased emphasis on monitoring and evaluation, many donor-financed projects fail to collect or preserve important statistical indicators. At the same time, new technologies and the advent of geographic information systems are making possible innovative methods of collecting, storing and analysing data, requiring additional efforts towards creating international standards and methods for managing and disseminating large data sets.

A renewed partnership to improve statistics

19. A partnership endorsed by the Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to implement the Busan Action Plan for Statistics provides the opportunity to extend the progress made over the last decade under the Marrakech Action Plan and to provide direction for the decade ahead. The Action Plan has three principal objectives:

- **Fully integrate statistics in decision-making**. Improvements in the production of statistics are essential, but policymakers and programme managers must also understand how to use statistics effectively. Poor-quality statistics lead to their underuse, which in turn leads to neglect and underfunding of statistical activities. Statistical offices should be routinely engaged in planning, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation processes so that the statistics they produce are relevant and meet user priorities.

- **Promote open access to statistics**. The hallmark of transparent and accountable Governments is open access to information. Making timely and reliable statistics widely available to the public as well as to policymakers and other stakeholders increases Government effectiveness and public confidence.

- **Increase resources for statistical systems**. Continued investment is a key to breaking the vicious cycle of neglect and disuse of statistics. Financial support for national statistical systems should be integrated in development assistance programmes with developing countries providing in-country leadership. Donors should adopt system-wide approaches, coordinating their assistance strategies to ensure they are consistent with national priorities.

Busan Action Plan for Statistics

20. The Action Plan has benefited from a thorough consultation process and has been endorsed by members of the PARIS21 partnership and other key development partners. It builds on past successes and addresses outstanding gaps, going well beyond current approaches. It draws from experience acquired since the launch of the Marrakech Action Plan and an assessment of the major factors shaping the

evolution of statistical systems. While its focus is on country capacity development through country-owned and country-led development strategies, it still recognizes the interdependence of national and international statistical activity. It proposes a manageable number of actions that can be adapted flexibly to country circumstances.

21. Like the Marrakech Action Plan, it recognizes the complementary roles of developing countries, bilateral development partners and international agencies. It encourages a coordinated system-wide approach to capacity development. Aid aligned with countries' statistical development strategies will be more effective than ad hoc, donor-initiated capacity development and data-collection efforts. And improvements in country statistical systems will improve international statistics, while a more effective international system will provide more consistent advice and better support for national activities.

22. This plan will also rely on indicators to track progress under each action. Although a work in progress, some possible progress indicators are provided under each of the five actions.

Action 1. Strengthen and refocus national and regional statistical strategies, with particular emphasis on improving statistical systems that address country-level development priorities. A key aim is to increase in-country capacity to respond to emerging and unforeseen needs. Strategies should be updated to reflect new challenges and opportunities and integrate international and domestic data-collection activities.

- Building on existing national plans, prioritize implementation to ensure that crucial domestic policy priorities are addressed first. Early small successes achieved through gradual implementation will help build up to larger successes at a later stage.
- Establish partnerships of national users and producers of data through communities of practice at both the national and regional levels to enhance communication and encourage innovation.[h]
- Grounded in country priorities, ensure that gender statistics are fully mainstreamed into the national statistical system. This will require improving existing data-collection approaches and developing new ones that are implemented on a regular basis. Multi-purpose household surveys will be particularly important for measurement of female entrepreneurship, time use, access to finance and gender-based violence.
- Address weaknesses in vital registration systems and data critical for monitoring programme performance, including administrative data, sex-disaggregated data and geospatial information.
- Ensure that the development of sectoral data (such as agriculture, health, education, environment and labour) is fully integrated into and synchronized with national and regional statistical strategies, not only to contribute to stronger statistical systems but also to rationalize resources and reduce the duplication of efforts across ministries at the country level.

[h] Regional communities of practice on managing for development results currently exist to serve as platforms for knowledge exchange and capacity development.

Possible indicators to track progress: (a) number of national strategies for the development of statistics with clear priorities and costing for implementation; (b) countries incorporating specific plans for gender statistics in their strategies; and (c) level of "alignment" of statistical capacity development actions with the strategies.

Action 2. Implement standards for data preservation, documentation and dissemination that permit full public access to statistics.

- Initial efforts should be directed towards instances where statistics exist, but have not been published. Building on the success of efforts to improve access to household surveys, expand in-country capacity for data documentation and preservation, anonymization and dissemination of enterprise statistics, vital statistics and administrative data.
- Support the development of legal frameworks to encourage open access to data.
- Develop frameworks for assessing the "openness" of the statistical programmes of national and international statistical offices.
- Facilitate the dissemination of data standards and common survey methodologies for enterprise and administrative data.
- Support the implementation of global geospatial information management systems.

Possible indicators to track progress: (a) proportion of national websites offering free data; (b) published assessments of statistical "openness"; (c) development of a catalogue for enterprise statistics and administrative data; and (d) number of countries publishing recent census data and documentation thereof on their national websites.

Action 3. Develop programmes to increase the knowledge and skills needed to use statistics effectively for planning, analysis, monitoring and evaluation, thus increasing transparency and accountability and improve accessibility of statistics at the national and international levels.

- Use new technologies and innovative methods of e-learning to share knowledge between producers and users of statistics.
- Develop programmes to increase public awareness of the role of data in policy development and tracking outcomes to empower users to more effectively use statistics.
- Ensure that technical and financial support of statistical and monitoring and evaluation systems remains aligned with national policy priorities and that statistical producers are closer to discussions on policy priorities.
- Recommend curation standards for information collected by development organizations through their research activities and development projects. Encourage implementation of the data standard of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).

Possible indicators to track progress: (a) number of registered users of globally endorsed e-learning tools; (b) measures of advocacy material; (c) number of national statistical office websites that are updated at least weekly; (d) number of

countries maintaining and publishing up-to-date quality assurance frameworks for their official statistics; and (e) number of development partners adopting internationally accepted transparency standards.

Action 4. Build and maintain results-monitoring instruments to track outcomes of all global summits and high-level forums. Rigorous monitoring of global initiatives requires collaboration between national and international statistical organizations. Outcome documents should specifically recognize the need for statistical capacity development, including technical assistance, training and financial support.

- Resolutions of global summits and high-level forums should clearly state the policy issue being addressed and the key set of indicators to be developed and provide an implementation strategy for sequencing technical assistance, training and financing.
- Statistical activities required by global initiatives should be implemented with developing-country leadership, consistent with their national strategies and at a pace in keeping with other priority needs.
- Monitoring and follow-up reports should include assessments of statistical progress.
- Through the Interagency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, in the context of existing statistical capacity development initiatives and working closely with national statistical offices and other stakeholders, provide adequate support to countries to produce data based on established indicators for monitoring the progress of gender initiatives.
- Examples of other global commitments include the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics and the newly established United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management.

Possible indicators to track progress: (a) share of summits and high-level meetings that specifically mention statistics/indicators; (b) share of summits that agree on a set of common indicators to measure goals and commitments; and (c) availability of "bulletin boards" or other public information sites providing complete data and metadata for monitoring global initiatives.

Action 5. Ensure financing for statistical information is robust and that funding instruments and approaches reflect the new modalities and actors in development finance.

- International organizations and bilateral agencies should ensure financial support is sufficient, flexible and adaptable to rapidly changing in-country requirements. Donor programmes should be coordinated and aligned with the priorities agreed in national and regional statistical strategies.
- Recognize statistical capacity development and implementation of monitoring and evaluation frameworks as priorities in bilateral and multilateral institutional work programmes.
- Governance arrangements should be inclusive, reflecting the changing mix of development actors.

- In the same way that monitoring and evaluation is now seen to be a necessary part of project financing, international organizations should incorporate support for statistics in all development assistance programmes.
- Ensure that critical global initiatives — such as statistics for gender equity and women's empowerment — are adequately funded to support country requirements in developing their statistical capacity.

Possible indicators to track progress: (a) trends in donor funding allocations to capacity development, including levels of concentration and fragmentation; (b) share of activities relating to national strategies for the development of statistics financed through domestic contributions; and (c) number of donor/Government in-country coordination groups, instances of pooled resources, basket funds.

Implementation

23. Implementing these actions will require substantial effort and investment across the range of development actors, with developing countries playing an important leadership role. Although the Action Plan establishes priorities, it must be translated into a set of time-bound implementation steps. These steps will recognize that fragile States and small island developing States have special needs and may require different, perhaps phased, approaches to capacity development and institution-building. Implementation will also reflect the increasing diversity of the development partnership in terms of financial support, knowledge exchange and sources of technical advice. Implementation will adhere to the following criteria:

- Broad international support exists and a lead agency/partnership/institution can be identified to support in-country leadership of national implementation strategies
- In-country capacity development is the primary focus (not building international bureaucracies)
- Outcomes are identifiable, monitorable and time-bound (indicative indicators to track implementation progress are provided above)
- Implementation is "bureaucracy-light" and will rely on existing partnerships, agencies and institutions

24. Financial support for statistics will come primarily from domestic revenues but donor support remains essential. It will be important to seek new sources of financial assistance — from new and prospective donor Governments, international companies and foundations — to supplement existing sources of finance. Funding instruments of bilateral agencies and multilateral institutions should be sufficiently flexible and robust to channel both existing and new financing to improve in-country statistical capacity.

25. Governance structures overseeing implementation will draw from existing institutions and frameworks. At the national level, national strategies for the development of statistics have become established practice, helping to ensure country ownership in setting improvements and providing a coordination mechanism for donor programmes and projects. These strategies will be updated to provide a framework for effective and results-oriented strategic management of the

national statistical system and for mobilizing, harnessing and leveraging both national and international resources.

26. Full engagement by international bodies will be crucial. The Statistical Commission is the highest decision-making body for international statistical activities, especially the setting of statistical standards, the development of concepts and methods and their implementation at the national and international levels. Implementation of the Action Plan and results will be regularly reported to the Commission, in compliance with its reporting policy. In addition, PARIS21 is an effective forum of donors and development partners and network to promote, influence and facilitate statistical capacity development and the better use of statistics at the national and international level.[1] To effectively support capacity development and harmonization with existing statistical organizations, systems and regional agencies should be regarded as extremely important. International agency and expert groups such as those established by the United Nations to monitor the Millennium Development Goals or to guide the development of gender statistics provide effective mechanisms for bringing together national and international experts to exchange knowledge and solve problems. These and other expert groups will play important roles in the implementation of the Action Plan.

Conclusions

27. Implementation of the Action Plan will help fill statistical gaps of relevance to critical policy issues, while going beyond past efforts in the following important ways:

- Adopting a system-wide approach to capacity development to integrate national statistical activities with the requirements of planning, budgeting, monitoring and results.
- Recognizing the important synergies between survey and census-based data, administrative data and vital statistics.
- Explicitly supporting greater transparency and encouraging the use of new methods and technologies to increase the reliability and accessibility of official statistics.

28. As such, the Busan Forum is invited to acknowledge the importance of establishing a global partnership to support the Action Plan and encourage rapid implementation.

[1] For more information on PARIS21 activities, visit www.paris21.org.

Appendix

Recent/emerging statistical programmes responding to global initiatives

Initiative	*Issues to address*	*Lead agency*	*Key outputs and delivery dates*
Gender statistics initiative	Gender data to produce the minimum set of gender indicators to support policies to promote gender equality and empowerment of women, focusing in particular on strengthening data-collection instruments — especially household surveys	Statistics Division, UN-Women, World Bank, OECD	A set of indicators to be developed and an implementation plan to collect these statistics as discussed at the October 2011 meeting of the Interagency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics. This includes a list of 15 indicators focusing on employment, education and entrepreneurship
Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics	Critical gaps in data limit policymaking regarding nutrition, food security and rural development	FAO	Core set of indicators to be generated by national statistical systems over the next 5 to 10 years. Implementation strategy to be discussed by donors in October 2011
Monitoring of vital events, including through use of information technology	Vital statistics underpin demographic estimates; vital statistics systems provide documentation of citizenship and legal status of individuals	WHO, HMN	Strengthen country information systems to ensure recording and reporting of every birth and death, with a cause of death
Programme on Global Geospatial Information Management	Further develop global geospatial information and promote its use to address key global challenges	Statistics Division	Integrating statistical information with spatial framework so that detailed information becomes available at local level for development planning
G-20 initiative to address gaps in financial indicators	Critical information gaps revealed by the global financial crisis	IMF	Reports available from www.imf.org
G-20 Financial Inclusion Action Plan: action 4 — improve data	Improve measurement for the purpose of promoting financial inclusion, increasing awareness of the issue, and strengthening and informing national financial inclusion strategies	Mexico, World Bank Group	Propose a core set/framework of financial inclusion indicators
Open Data Initiative	Expand activities to develop standardized concepts and methods for statistical data and facilitate curation, storage and accessibility of these data	World Bank	Continuous expansion, near-term objectives include additional microdata holdings, climate change data and helping countries make their data more accessible

Initiative	*Issues to address*	*Lead agency*	*Key outputs and delivery dates*
Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goal Indicators	Preparation of data and analysis to monitor progress towards the Goals. Review and define methodologies and technical issues in relation to the indicators, produce guidelines and support countries in data-collection, analysis and reporting on Millennium Development Goals	Statistics Division	*Millennium Development Goal Report 2010*
The Monrovia road map on peacebuilding and statebuilding	Development of a set of peacebuilding and statebuilding indicators, combining both objective measures and measures to understand the views and perceptions of people on results achieved	International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding	Work in progress

United Nations E/CN.3/2012/17

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
6 December 2011

Original: English

Statistical Commission
Forty-third session
28 February-2 March 2012
Item 3 (n) of the provisional agenda*
Items for discussion and decision: statistics of human development

Report of the United Nations Development Programme on statistics of human development

Note by the Secretary-General

In response to a request made by the Statistical Commission at its forty-second session (see E/2011/24, chap. I.A, decision 42/110), the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on statistics of human development. The report shows the commitment of the Human Development Report Office of UNDP to addressing the concerns that were raised by Member States at the forty-second session of the Statistical Commission. It provides an account of the concrete steps taken and the processes and structures set in place to improve the constructive engagement with Member States and the global statistical community with regard to the measurement of human development and to support greater transparency in the production of the 2011 and future editions of the *Human Development Report*. The Commission may wish to review these procedures and processes.

* E/CN.3/2012/1.

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Report of the United Nations Development Programme on statistics of human development

I. Introduction

1. At its forty-second session, the Statistical Commission discussed statistics of human development. The Commission considered a paper prepared by the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),[1] as well as the report of the Bureau of the Commission on statistics of human development (E/CN.3/2011/14) and the report of Brazil, Morocco and South Africa on the concern expressed by some Member States about the indicators released by United Nations agencies (E/CN.3/2011/16).

2. The Commission considered a range of concerns, including a perceived lack of transparency and consultations, discrepancies between national and international sources of data and the omission of some States from the 2010 Human Development Index.

3. On 20 May 2011, in response to the request contained in paragraph (j) of Commission decision 42/110, the Human Development Report Office sent a note to the Commission outlining the steps it was taking to address the concerns raised. In the note, the Office listed the specific activities already taken and the processes and structures put in place to improve the constructive engagement with Member States and the global statistical community with regard to the measurement of human development. The Office has institutionalized these procedures to provide full transparency regarding the statistical sources and measures used in the production of the 2011 and future editions of the *Human Development Report*.

4. Section III of the present report contains information on the actions taken to address the specific requests and recommendations outlined in Commission decision 42/110. Section IV provides an overview of current and future activities. The Commission will also be presented with a background document that includes the 2011 report calendar, the composition and minutes of the meeting held by the statistical advisory panel in 2011, a list of consultations and meetings, a copy of the letter addressed to national statistical offices (with its annexes), a copy of the initial letter to countries not listed in the Human Development Index, a copy of the final letter to countries not listed in the 2011 Human Development Index and a copy of the letter addressed to national statistical offices about mean years of schooling.

II. Background

5. In its resolution 57/264, the General Assembly affirmed that the *Human Development Report* is a separate and distinct exercise which is not an official document of the United Nations. The Executive Board of UNDP, in its decision 94/15, referred to the editorial independence of the report. The Commission has explicitly recognized that UNDP is not a data collection entity and that the *Human Development Report* is an editorially independent report commissioned and published by UNDP.

[1] Available at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc11/BG-HDRO.pdf.

6. During the preparations for the *Human Development Report 2010* and with measurement innovations under consideration, the Human Development Report Office requested that an item on the report be included in the agenda of the forty-first session of the Commission, in 2010, but consideration of the item was deferred to 2011. Nevertheless, in 2010 the Commission established an expert group to examine proposed changes to the report's Human Development Index. The 12-member expert group held a one-day meeting with the Office on 24 March 2010 and issued a set of conclusions and recommendations.

7. The Office incorporated the recommendations of the expert group into the *Human Development Report 2010* to the extent possible, including by fully disclosing, in the report and/or on the Office's website, all the sources of the data and the methodologies used in the report's indices, by avoiding imputations whenever possible and by using official statistical series. The expert group had also recommended that the dialogue between the Office and the official statistical community be improved, as a means to further refine the conceptual and methodological basis of the Human Development Index, and that UNDP reactivate the statistical advisory panel for the report.

8. In addition, during 2010 the Office communicated with the expert group, as reflected in the detailed feedback it provided to the group's preliminary report (dated 30 March) and the preliminary and final responses it provided to the group's final report (dated 1 July and 15 September). Through these communications, the Office not only provided information on the measures it was taking to incorporate the group's recommendations but also kept the group informed about ongoing methodological changes and considerations, as requested by the group.

III. Follow-up to Statistical Commission decision 42/110

9. The Human Development Report Office is committed to maintaining constructive engagement with the statistical authorities of Member States. Several initiatives have been taken to implement paragraphs (e) to (j) of Commission decision 42/110, as summarized in the annex to the present report.

10. Several actions have been taken to increase the transparency of the process of preparing the *Human Development Report*, through better communication with Member States and the official statistics community and the re-establishment of the statistical advisory panel. More systematic communications with Member States on data and indicator-related issues have also been established with the objective of assuring the quality and expanding the country coverage of the Human Development Index.

Communications with national statistical offices

11. Communications have been enhanced to strengthen transparency and effectively address areas of concern, particularly the discrepancy between national and international data. The Human Development Report Office informed all national statistical offices about the indicators and the sources of the data that would be used in the tables of the *Human Development Report 2011*, the calendar for the finalization of the tables and the initiatives to calculate mean years of schooling for

the Human Development Index in order to improve country coverage.[2] The letter was also sent to the regional economic commissions, the secretariat of the Caribbean Community and the secretariat of the Pacific Community. The text of the letter will be included in the background document mentioned in paragraph 4 above. Similar letters will be sent for the preparation of future editions of the report.

12. To address the requests contained in Commission decision 42/110, the calendar for the preparation of the report was shared with all national statistical offices and will be included in the background document mentioned in paragraph 4 above. The calendar includes key target dates in terms of production, communications and consultations and review.

13. Interactions with national statistical offices have been enhanced in several ways, as set out below, including with respect to the sources of data used and the countries covered in the Human Development Index.

Statistical advisory panel

14. The statistical advisory panel was reactivated in March 2011. It consists of six senior members of national statistical agencies, three senior members of international statistical agencies, one director of a leading policy think tank and four academics who are leading international experts in quantitative development research. The panel held its first meeting on 14 April and agreed on a mandate to provide advice and feedback to the Human Development Report Office with respect to (a) the overall methodology and indicators for the composite indices that were used in the *Human Development Report 2011* and that will continue to be used in subsequent reports; (b) the conceptual value, appropriateness and statistical quality of other indicators in the statistical annex; (c) effective interactions between data providers and other statistical stakeholders; and (d) any other specific questions related to the statistical content of the *Human Development Report*.

15. The statistical advisory panel complements both the general advisory panel for the *Human Development Report* — which is focused on providing advice and feedback on the narrative and analysis in the report — and the expert group on the Human Development Index, which, as noted above, has undertaken detailed technical reviews and discussions of statistics and processes related to the *Human Development Report*.[3]

16. The discussion held by the statistical advisory panel in April focused on the estimates for mean years of schooling and gross national income (GNI) in purchasing power parity constant terms. The panel supported the updating of the mean years of schooling by the Human Development Report Office as an appropriate interim step and welcomed the proposed long-term solution based on collaboration with the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The panel reviewed and endorsed the proposed methodology for computing GNI, including the methodology that had been discussed with the statistical authorities of Cuba. It was underlined that missing values should only be estimated for a maximum of one indicator per

[2] The letter was sent through the Statistical Division, the permanent missions to the United Nations and the UNDP country offices between 24 and 27 March.

[3] The Bureau of the Statistical Commission decided not to hold a meeting of the expert group in 2011.

country, that sensitivity analysis should be applied to all models and that the models and results should be communicated to concerned countries.

17. The list of members, as well as the agenda and a summary of the meeting of the statistical advisory panel held in 2011, will be included in the background document mentioned in paragraph 4 above. The panel is expected to hold a meeting on 25 February 2012, in advance of the forty-third session of the Statistical Commission. In line with a letter from the Commission dated 16 September 2011, in 2012 the panel will have eight members from developing countries, two members from developed countries, two members from international organizations (the World Bank and UNESCO) and one representative from academia. The meeting to be held on 25 February will be co-chaired by Enrico Giovannini, President of the Italian National Institute for Statistics, and Anthony Atkinson, Professor at Oxford University, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Use of official statistics

18. In recognition of the concerns expressed about the use of unofficial estimates of mean years of schooling in the Human Development Index, discussions are under way between the Human Development Report Office and UNESCO about the compilation of data on mean years of schooling. The fact that the UNESCO Institute for Statistics has committed itself to investigating the feasibility of producing these estimates for 2012 is welcomed. In 2011, the Institute for Statistics updated its database on the educational attainment of the adult population with data from many countries reporting new census data.[4] Using the newly available data on educational attainment, the Office updated the estimates of mean years of schooling for 34 countries and made them available on its website on 10 July 2011. A letter was sent to all national statistical offices informing them that the estimates had been posted on the website. The text of that letter will be included in the background document mentioned in paragraph 4 above.

Consultations, workshops and meetings

19. Several events have been organized and hosted by the Human Development Report Office since the forty-second session of the Statistical Commission in order to make the processes of preparing and acquiring data even more transparent. A full list of the events is included in the background document mentioned in paragraph 4 above. Among the events were the following:

(a) In February 2011, delegates to the forty-second session of the Statistical Commission from countries not included in the 2010 Human Development Index because of missing data and statistical advisers from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Caribbean Community, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the secretariat of the Pacific Community attended a meeting to discuss ways to ensure that relevant and available international data are communicated to the Human Development Report Office;

(b) A two-week human development course on the theme of measurement, organized by the Human Development Report Office, was held in March 2011 in Oxford, United Kingdom. The course brought together 43 policymakers, national

[4] The data are available from http://stats.uis.unesco.org.

statisticians, UNDP staff and experts representing 30 countries.[5] At the course, participants were provided with information on the development, calculation and analysis of the new indices and on other changes introduced in the *Human Development Report 2010*. The course also provided an opportunity to test guidance materials on the revised and new indices;

(c) Engagement with national statistical offices, including those invited to regional events coordinated by the Office and bilateral meetings, has expanded;

(d) A number of regional workshops on human development concepts and measurements have taken place. From 9 to 11 May, in Doha, a workshop jointly organized by the Qatar Statistics Authority and ESCWA was held for the six States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council. At the workshop, recommendations were made on the harmonization among Council member States of statistics relevant for human development, on the need to reduce discrepancies between national and international data, on making household survey data available for international comparison and analysis and on building the capacity of national statistical offices to produce and analyse statistics relevant for human development. A similar workshop was held in Kigali from 21 to 24 June, to which the representatives of the national statistical offices of countries neighbouring Rwanda had been invited.[6] A teleconference/workshop on human development statistics was held with the heads of national statistical offices of the States members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States on 19 October 2011.

20. Despite its limited staff, the Human Development Report Office has given priority to attending and participating in regional and international gatherings of statisticians. Each of these occasions has provided valuable opportunities for Office staff to meet with official statisticians and solicit feedback. Recent events have included the conference entitled "Statistics for policymakers: Europe 2020", organized by Eurostat (10 and 11 March); the tenth meeting of the Executive Committee of the ECLAC Statistical Conference of the Americas (6-8 April); the fifty-ninth plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (14-16 June); and the sixth meeting of the ECLAC Statistical Conference of the Americas (16-18 November).

21. As a follow-up to the tenth meeting of the Executive Committee of the ECLAC Statistical Conference of the Americas, on 16 May the Human Development Report Office held a teleconference with the expert group for the Human Development Index established by ECLAC.[7] Participants discussed a range of issues related to the measurement of human development, indicators used in the Human Development Index (in particular the use of GNI) and the role of cross-country regression models for the estimation of missing values. The discrepancy between national and international data was discussed and the Human Development Report Office agreed to conduct an additional comparison of international sources.

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[5] The following countries were represented at the meeting: Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, India, Iraq, Jamaica, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Nicaragua, Portugal, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Gambia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.

[6] Summaries of the events are available from http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2011.

[7] The expert group consisted of the heads of national statistical offices and representatives of Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba and the Dominican Republic, as well as the ECLAC Statistical Division.

The report of the expert group and a summary of the teleconference were presented and discussed at the sixth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, when the Office informed the Conference about the steps taken, the procedures put in place and its commitment to continue the dialogue with national and international statistical authorities.

22. The Office fully endorses the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the Principles Governing International Statistical Activities, and will continue, as a user of data produced by other international statistical organizations, to apply the relevant principles.[8]

Reducing discrepancies between data from national and international sources

23. The Human Development Report Office relies on data from mandated international organizations. It is well known that there are sometimes discrepancies between data from such organizations and data reported by States. For example, with regard to the indicators of the Millennium Development Goals, enormous efforts are made by the Inter-agency and Expert Group for Millennium Development Goals Indicators to reconcile national and international data. Several discrepancies were pointed out by Member States in their report to the Statistical Commission, and, in paragraph (e) (ii) of its decision 42/110, the Commission noted such discrepancies. While the Office has neither the mandate nor the resources to reconcile national and international data, it encourages efforts to reduce such discrepancies and improve the quality of all officially reported statistics in the United Nations system. In a letter dated 25 March 2011, the Office asked national statistical offices to bring any discrepancies they had noticed to the attention of the international agencies concerned and to inform it of gaps and differences. In cases where a discrepancy is evident, the practice of the Office has always been to inform the relevant international data provider. In addition, it has been taking the following steps to address this systemic problem:

(a) Informing national statistical offices in advance about the data sources to be used;

(b) Undertaking a systematic comparison of possible sources for indicators considered for the tables in the *Human Development Report 2011*.

Improved country coverage

24. The Human Development Report Office has always aimed to cover as many countries as possible in the Human Development Index while, as noted above, avoiding, to the extent possible, the estimation of missing values. Every year some countries are omitted from the Index because the relevant indicators are not available. In 2011, the Office started giving the affected countries advance notice of such omission.

25. Consistent with this new practice, on 7 April the Office informed some national statistical offices that the inadequacy of the international official data for one or more indicators may have prevented the inclusion of their country in the Human Development Index for 2011. The letter included a proposal for possible

[8] Available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/statorg/FP-English.htm and http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/statorg/Principles_stat_activities/principles_stat_activities.htm.

estimation, subject to the advice of the statistical advisory panel and the expert group of the Statistical Commission.[9] Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Kitts and Nevis, as well as the Occupied Palestinian Territory, among others, replied agreeing with the suggested approach. Another notification to States affected by the missing indicators was sent on 1 July. Examples of the letters will be included in the background document mentioned in paragraph 4 above.

26. A communication channel with the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat has been established to expedite the provision of education and income indicators for small island developing States.

27. All estimated values of missing indicators were communicated to the national statistical offices concerned, together with the methods used for their computation. The values and the methods were posted on the website of the Human Development Report Office for fast and easy access and review. States have had an opportunity to review the values and, if the method was believed to be suboptimal, to propose a clearly documented alternative, to be reviewed by the Office and the statistical advisory panel.

28. The tenth meeting of the Executive Committee of the ECLAC Statistical Conference of the Americas provided an opportunity for the President of the National Statistical Office of Cuba to agree on a model for estimating a purchasing power parity conversion rate for GNI, the unavailability of which was the sole reason for the omission of Cuba from the Human Development Index in 2010. A method was agreed with the authorities, as confirmed in follow-up communications with Ileana Nuñez Mordoche, the Director of the Ministry for Foreign Trade, and subsequently endorsed by the statistical advisory panel.

29. The data sources in the *Human Development Report 2011* are more clearly labelled and the report includes notes about methodologies. Where appropriate, clarifications regarding the sources are provided, especially with respect to the use of unofficial data. The data in future editions of the report will be presented in the same way.

30. The Human Development Report Office is continuously reviewing the standards and practices for presenting references and specific notes that are not part of the regular definition of indicators. The technical notes on composite indices were amended to better explain all the procedures used to obtain estimates, including those related to missing indicators.[10]

31. The human development measurement primer published in 2007 is being updated to reflect the new human development indices and their applicability at the national level and to provide guidelines and tools for human development research, analysis and advocacy. The target audience includes people working on national and regional human development reports. These will become publicly available in English early in 2012.

[9] The letter was sent to the national statistical offices of the countries concerned, their permanent missions to the United Nations and the UNDP country offices on 7 April 2011.

[10] Available from http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices.

IV. Future activities related to the implementation of Statistical Commission decision 42/110

32. The Human Development Report Office will continue to engage with the international statistical community on the choice and quality of indicators, as outlined above. The first meeting of the statistical advisory panel in 2012 is scheduled to be held on 25 February. At the request of the members of the panel, a short lunchtime meeting with national statisticians from ECLAC countries is expected to be held during the same week of the session of the Statistical Commission, also in February.

33. In addition, the Office is organizing a conference on measuring progress in development, to be held on 26 January 2012, with the objective of advancing the discussion on measuring progress, focusing on the critical review of the family of human development indices and their validity from policy and conceptual perspectives.

34. The above-mentioned mechanisms — aimed at enhancing consultation and communications, improving transparency during the preparation of the *Human Development Report* and the establishment of formal channels of dialogue with the official statistical community — are now in place and will continue to be strengthened during preparations for the 2012 and future editions of the *Human Development Report*, subject to feedback and improvements over time. The Director and staff of the Human Development Report Office remain available for any questions and continue to welcome opportunities for bilateral discussions with Member States on the use of data and other matters related to the report.

V. Point for discussion

35. The Commission may wish to review the procedures and processes set out in the present report.

Annex

Steps taken by the Human Development Report Office to address Statistical Commission decision 42/110

Relevant section of Statistical Commission decision 42/110	*Follow-up action taken by the Human Development Report Office*	*Relevant paragraph of the present report*
(e) The Statistical Commission expressed deep regret and strong dissatisfaction that the Human Development Report Office did not respond adequately to the recommendations of the expert group on the Human Development Index with respect to the quality and availability of data for the chosen indicators, the use of non-official source data and the need to hold extensive consultation with the global statistical community prior to the release of the 2010 report	The recommendations of the expert group have been followed with respect to: • Transparency of data sources and methodologies used • Avoidance of imputations where possible • Use of official statistical series • Improved dialogue with the official statistical community • Reactivation of the statistical advisory panel	Para. 7
The Commission noted further in this context the following issues:		
(i) That some countries were omitted from the *Human Development Report* on the grounds of lack of data and that the national statistical offices were not informed prior to the decision to omit them;	When relevant indicators are not available, countries have been omitted from the Human Development Index. The Human Development Report Office has started notifying affected countries in advance.	Para. 25
(ii) That there were discrepancies between the data contained in the *Human Development Report* and the data available from national sources, as well as discrepancies between data published by different United Nations agencies;	Discrepancies in the data are recognized as a major issue and the Office has proposed measures to address the issue.	Para. 23
	To shift towards using official estimates of mean years of schooling in the Human Development Index, the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has committed itself to investigating the feasibility of producing those estimates for 2012.	Para. 18
(iii) That non-official data were used, in which case the Commission emphasized that when official data are not available, non-official data should be used, but only after consultation on the quality and accuracy of the data has been undertaken with the respective national statistical offices and that detailed explanations of the sources and methodologies used should be provided;	The Office is committed to improving the way in which data are presented and sources are explained.	Para. 29

Relevant section of Statistical Commission decision 42/110	*Follow-up action taken by the Human Development Report Office*	*Relevant paragraph of the present report*
(f) The Commission stressed the relevance of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and of the Principles Governing International Statistical Activities to the issue at hand and urged the United Nations Development Programme to review the Principles and subscribe to them, and in this context encouraged the United Nations Development Programme, in order to improve coordination, to play an active role in forums such as the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities;	The Office fully endorses the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the Principles Governing International Statistical Activities.	Para. 22
(g) The Commission recognized that while the choice of the theme and of the indicators for the *Human Development Report* is the prerogative of the United Nations Development Programme, the issue of data quality and adequacy falls within the purview of the Commission on behalf of the global statistical system and prior consultation is necessary;	The Commission regularly reviews the Human Development Index, its components and other aspects related to data quality and statistical inference.	Para. 5
	The Commission has recognized that the United Nations Development Programme is not a data collection entity and that the *Human Development Report* is not an official document of the United Nations, in line with General Assembly resolution 57/264.	Para. 5
(h) The Commission reiterated the need for the United Nations Development Programme to be fully transparent in its methods of statistical work in preparing the *Human Development Report* and called for consultation with all parties concerned;	The Office has made significant efforts to strengthen the transparency of the process of preparing and collecting data for the *Human Development Report*, including by:	Para. 19
	• Re-establishing the statistics advisory panel	Para. 14
	• Meeting with Commission delegates from countries not included in the 2010 Human Development Index	Para. 19 (a)
	• Holding a two-week human development course on measurement in March 2011, which brought together 43 policymakers, national statisticians, staff of the United Nations Development Programme and experts from 30 developing countries	Para. 19 (b)
	• Holding or planning to hold 38 regional- or national-level consultations, to which national statistical offices are usually invited	Para. 19 (c)

Relevant section of Statistical Commission decision 42/110	*Follow-up action taken by the Human Development Report Office*	*Relevant paragraph of the present report*
	• **Jointly organizing workshops on the human development concept and on measurement, including for the States of the Gulf Cooperating Council, in Qatar, and sub-Saharan Africa, in Rwanda**	**Para. 19 (d)**
	• Attending and participating in major regional and international gatherings of statisticians	Para. 20
	• Including clearly labelled data sources and methodological notes in the *Human Development Report 2011*	Para. 30
(i) The Commission stressed the continuing role of the expert group on the Human Development Index established by the Commission, and mandated it to continue work in reviewing the issues arising from its first report;	The statistical advisory panel was reactivated on the recommendation of the expert group of the Commission.	Para. 14
	The Office has expressed its willingness to meet with the expert group to discuss methodological and data-related issues.	Footnote 6
(j) The Commission requested the United Nations Development Programme to:		
(i) Report back to the Commission within three months on the issues raised in the present decision;	The requested report, in which the steps that have been taken by the Office and its commitment to addressing all of the Commission's concerns were outlined, was submitted on time.	Para. 3
(ii) Establish a calendar for the various preparatory phases for the *Human Development Report*, and disseminate the calendar to national statistical offices or national coordinating agencies so that they are informed about the sources of statistical data and the methods used in the report and about ways to address potential concerns and facilitate their resolution;	The Office has provided all national statistical offices and regional economic commissions with a calendar outlining all the steps leading to the finalization of the tables for 2011.	Para. 11
	The calendar includes key milestones relating to production, communications, consultations and review.	Para. 12
(iii) Consult in advance with Member States when reviewing the statistical data required for the indicators to be used for the *Human Development Report*;	The Office wrote to all national statistical offices to inform them about the indicators and data sources used for the tables in the *Human Development Report 2011*.	Para. 11
	See also the steps outlined above under subparagraph (e).	Para. 25

Relevant section of Statistical Commission decision 42/110	*Follow-up action taken by the Human Development Report Office*	*Relevant paragraph of the present report*
(iv) Establish a communication plan with national statistical offices on the use and adequacy of non-official national data, in cases where official national data are not available;	The Office informed the national statistical offices in countries where the inadequacy of the data may prevent their inclusion in the *Human Development Report 2011* and proposed estimation methodologies.	Para. 25
	Follow-up notifications were sent on 1 July.	Para. 23
	All missing value estimations were shared with national statistical offices for review.	Para. 27
	The Office met with the President of the National Statistical Office of Cuba to agree on a model for estimating a purchasing power parity conversion rate for gross national income.	Para. 28

United Nations E/CN.3/2012/18

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 December 2011

Original: English

Statistical Commission
Forty-third session
28 February-2 March 2012
Item 3 (o) of the provisional agenda*
Items for discussion and decision: regional statistical development in Europe

Report of the Economic Commission for Europe on regional statistical development in Europe

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with the request of the Statistical Commission at its forty-second session (see E/2011/24, chap. I.A), the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) on regional statistical development in Europe. The report elaborates on the coordination of international statistical work in the ECE region through the Conference of European Statisticians, describes the current challenges in methodological work and lists the recent guidelines and recommendations developed under the Conference of European Statisticians as a result of joint international work. It also highlights the main challenges in official statistics in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, including issues related to adherence to the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the need for statistical capacity-building. Specific points for discussion are suggested in paragraph 60.

* E/CN.3/2012/1.

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Report of the Economic Commission for Europe on regional statistical development in Europe

I. Introduction

1. At its forty-second session (22-25 February 2011), the Statistical Commission requested the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) to submit a report on statistical development in the ECE region to the Commission at its forty-third session (28 February-2 March 2012) (see E/2011/24, chap. I.A).

2. The present report discusses the coordination of international statistical work in the ECE region, addresses issues related to the implementation of the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, and highlights the main challenges facing official statistics, including needs for statistical capacity-building. The report focuses on statistical areas covered by ECE and the Conference of European Statisticians, and does not attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of all statistical challenges in the region.

3. The objective of the ECE statistical work programme is to improve the quality of official statistics at the national and international levels, and to ensure the coordination of international statistical activities undertaken in the ECE region. The work is steered by the Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau.

4. The Commission has 56 member States, including the countries of Europe, North America (Canada and United States of America), Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and Israel. For more than 10 years, the member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) outside the region (Australia, Chile, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico and New Zealand), as well as Brazil and Mongolia, have participated in the statistical work undertaken by ECE and have been active members of the Conference of European Statisticians. China, South Africa and some other countries outside the region have also participated in the meetings.

5. The ECE region consists of countries with very diverse levels of economic and statistical development. Furthermore, there is an overlap in the membership of ECE, OECD, the European Union (EU) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). These specifics have defined over the years the way the statistical work is organized in the region.

6. Twenty-seven of the ECE member countries are members of the European Union. The statistical systems of EU member countries and the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) make up the European Statistical System, which operates according to a common legal framework and Code of Practice.

7. Many of the OECD member countries also belong to the ECE region. As noted earlier, the OECD members outside the region participate actively in the work of the Conference of European Statisticians. The OECD Statistics Directorate is responsible for providing comparable statistics and promoting and developing statistical standards for the OECD member countries.

8. The statistical work in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia benefits from the support of the CIS Statistics Committee, which coordinates

the activities in those countries, promotes exchange of information, analyses socio-economic deve'opments, and develops common statistical recommendations.

9. This institutional landscape makes good international coordination and cooperation crucially important. The mechanisms and tools for implementing the coordination in practice are further explained in section II below.

II. Coordination of statistical work in the region of the Economic Commission for Europe

10. The Conference of European Statisticians and its Bureau provide a platform for coordination of international statistical work in the ECE region. Efficient coordination between the international organizations active in statistics is important in order to avoid duplication of work and to find synergies, in particular between ECE, the CIS Statistical Committee, Eurostat, OECD, the United Nations Statistics Division/Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat as well as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The Conference has a bridging role between the EU and OECD countries, and the non-EU, non-OECD countries. It also provides a link with the statistical work undertaken by a number of specialized agencies, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), among others.

11. The coordination of statistical work in Europe has its roots in the League of Nations. The first Conference on Statistics took place in Geneva already in 1928, and led to a series of meetings of national and international statistical experts. The Conference brought together 40 countries, including the United States of America, which was not a member of the League of Nations. Those meetings continued until the work of the League of Nations was brought to a halt by the Second World War.

12. The Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians also had a predecessor — the Committee of Statistical Experts — that met eight times over the period from 1931 to 1939. The members of that first Committee were: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Poland, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Already at that time, the Committee created subgroups of specialists to draft recommendations for standards. As is the case today, the draft recommendations were widely consulted with the participants of the Conference.

13. The first Regional Meeting of European Statisticians was held in Geneva in 1949. It was named the Conference of European Statisticians at the third meeting in 1953. In 2012, the Conference will hold its 60th plenary session.

14. Throughout the years, the work of the Conference of European Statisticians has led to many tangible outputs. Task forces working under the auspices of the Conference bring together the leading experts to develop methodological guidance on issues not addressed elsewhere. The work takes into account the different levels of statistical development of the member countries. Therefore, the recommendations and standards that have been developed often have broad international relevance.

15. The Conference holds a plenary session every June which includes a formal session and two seminars. The formal session deals with the review of general issues related to the international statistical work in the region, while the two

seminars focus on specific topics of current interest to the heads of national and international statistical agencies. One of the seminars concerns foundational issues of statistical systems and the other one new, emerging issues. The seminar topics are selected by countries to address current priorities, and in most cases the discussions lead to follow-up actions to prepare concrete outputs.

16. New work under the Conference is often initiated by the Conference of European Statisticians seminars. Most recent examples of follow-up work to the seminars include the development of a guide entitled *Impact of Globalization on National Accounts*, a framework for measuring sustainable development, a compilation of practices of national statistical offices in responding to the financial crises, and a stocktaking report on measuring human capital.

17. An important tool for statistical coordination in the region is the so-called in-depth reviews of selected statistical areas, carried out by the Conference and its Bureau. The aim of the reviews is to identify the need for better coordination, possible duplication of work and, most importantly, identify areas where methodological work is needed at the international level. The topics are also coordinated with the Statistics Division to avoid any overlap with the programme reviews conducted by the Statistical Commission.

18. During the last two years, the following topics have been reviewed: statistical dissemination and communication; government finance, fiscal and public sector statistics; the use of secondary and mixed sources for official statistics; time-use surveys; measuring the information society and statistics on science, technology and innovation; education statistics; global manufacturing; and household survey methods. The reviews lead to practical follow-up actions to address the problems identified, such as development of guidelines or recommendations, setting up wikis to share information, etc. The review papers are available at the ECE Statistical Division's website.[1]

19. Another important tool for the coordination of statistical work in the region is the Database of International Statistical Activities (DISA), compiled and maintained by the ECE secretariat. The Database is an annually updated compendium of statistical work of international organizations active in statistics in the ECE region. It is available online for countries and international organizations to foster cooperation and avoid duplication of effort.[2] The classification of statistical activities used in the database (the so-called DISA classification) has been adopted for various other purposes. For example, it is used for reporting on technical assistance activities by the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century — the PARIS 21 Consortium. The first three domains of this classification have been adopted as part of the Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) standard. The classification is also being used for the Global Inventory of Statistical Standards currently being prepared by the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities.

20. ECE actively participates in and contributes to the various forums organized and coordinated by the Statistics Division with the purpose of ensuring good coordination of work within the United Nations system. This includes follow-up to the decisions taken by the Statistical Commission, the Committee for the

[1] www.unece.org/stats/stats_h.html.

[2] www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/DISA2011.

Coordination of Statistical Activities and the coordination among the United Nations entities through the United Nations-Economic and Social Affairs cluster.

21. ECE provides the "regional arm" for promoting and implementing the global statistical standards in the region. For example, ECE is involved in developing the regional plan for the implementation of the *System of National Accounts 2008*[3] (2008 SNA), in work to improve the Millennium Development Goals indicators and in the development of gender statistics.

III. Methodological work

A. Latest guidelines and recommendations

22. Given the institutional setup in the region, many of the activities in the statistical programme are undertaken jointly with the main partners of ECE — Eurostat and OECD. This ensures efficient use of the resources and expertise of these organizations. Work targeting the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, especially capacity-building projects, is conducted in close cooperation and coordination with the CIS Statistical Committee and other major partners, such as the World Bank, Eurostat, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), IMF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and a number of other United Nations agencies.

23. The Conference provides a platform for the member States and international organizations to undertake joint methodological work on cutting-edge issues in statistics. The work leads to the production of manuals, guides and recommendations recognized and used by countries in the region and often beyond the ECE constituency. The regional diversity provides a good basis for developing guidelines and recommendations that can be used in both developed and developing statistical systems.

24. All statistical guidelines and recommendations are available on the ECE website, which also includes an online library of training materials. Some of the latest examples of such guides, prepared jointly with main partners, are listed below:

(a) The guide entitled *Impact of Globalization on National Accounts* provides comprehensive guidance for producers of economic statistics and those who use the data for policy analysis and research on how to deal with the impact of globalization;

(b) The second edition of the *Canberra Group Handbook on Household Income Statistics* reflects the latest international standards for household income statistics and provides further guidance on conceptual and practical issues related to their production and use;

(c) The guide on measuring quality of employment introduces a new concept for statistical measurement of quality of employment by unifying elements of earlier approaches, provides the results of pilot testing of a set of indicators, and recommends potential indicators for measuring quality of employment;

[3] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.08.XVII.29.

(d) *Developing Gender Statistics: a Practical Tool* provides guidance to statistical organizations in the production and use of gender statistics that is vital for policymakers for measuring progress in achieving gender equality. The manual is available in English and Russian and is planned to be translated into Spanish;

(e) *Manual on Victimization Surveys*, prepared in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), provides methodological guidelines for measuring victimization in society. The Manual is being translated into Russian, French and Spanish for use outside of the ECE region. The French and Spanish versions will be used by UNODC for regional and national training activities in various countries in Africa and Latin America;

(f) *Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing* provides assistance to countries in census-taking. The recommendations have been widely applied by countries in the recent round of censuses and have helped to improve the comparability of census data;

(g) *Measuring Sustainable Development* provides a framework for statistics on sustainable development based on the capital approach. The report promotes greater harmonization and comparability of statistics on sustainable development between countries;

(h) The Generic Statistical Business Process Model developed by ECE in international cooperation has been adopted by 40 organizations around the world. Examples of countries outside the ECE region include the Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand;

(i) The *Making Data Meaningful* guide (Parts 1-3) offers tips and recommendations on how to write stories about numbers, present statistics and communicate with the media. The guide has been translated into Croatian, Japanese, Russian and Spanish by the respective countries.

B. Current challenges in methodological work

25. The challenges and future priorities for the statistical work in the ECE region were discussed by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians in November 2011. The Bureau concluded that the issues dealt with by the Conference converge around four main pillars: globalization; sustainable development and environment; streamlining statistical production; and population censuses in the light of increasing use of register data.

26. The first pillar, globalization, and its impact on statistics is at the core of the work of the Conference, including both economic and social dimensions, such as migration. First, further guidance on how to account for the activities of multinational enterprises and the growing cross-border movement of people, capital, goods and services is needed. As a follow-up to the guide entitled *Impact of Globalization on National Accounts*, a task force was set up to develop practical guidance on global production in support of the implementation of the 2008 SNA and the sixth edition of the *Balance of Payments Manual* (BPM6). Secondly, the dialogue on international migration in the General Assembly has led to increased efforts to improve the measurement of migration. Among other related activities,

ECE will launch a clearing house on migration statistics with data for the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

27. Issues related to the measurement of sustainable development and environment are of increasing importance for the countries of the ECE region. Since 2009, a joint task force with the ECE Environment Division has reviewed methodologies and produced time series to improve comparability of environmental statistics in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

28. At its 64th session in March 2011, ECE highlighted the importance of high-quality statistical information to monitor the implementation of sustainable development strategies. The Commission requested the Conference to develop recommendations and agree on a common framework for measuring sustainable development within the realm of official statistics. Many different approaches and indicator sets exist in this area. A Joint ECE/Eurostat/OECD task force is therefore working towards harmonization of the approaches to measuring sustainable development. The work follows up on a conceptual framework based on the capital approach (published in 2009). The framework is extended to cover the issues of current well-being, quality of life and the international aspect of sustainable development. The proposed set of sustainable development indicators covers the "needs of the present generation", the "needs of the future generations" and the "international dimension". The Task Force plans to finalize the report in 2012. Furthermore, a small expert group has been set up to take stock of what has been done so far in measuring human capital.

29. Following the request of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians and the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting, the ECE secretariat carried out a survey to explore the involvement of national statistical officers in climate change-related work and to identify issues of common concern to be addressed at the international level. The questionnaire was prepared in consultation with experts from Statistics Norway, Statistics Finland, Eurostat and the European Environment Agency. The survey covered the involvement of national statistical officers in producing data for greenhouse gas emission inventories, work on climate change indicators, and priorities and future plans concerning climate change-related statistics. The survey was carried out in 2011 in coordination with Eurostat and the Statistics Division. In total, 47 countries from the ECE region and beyond replied to the questionnaire. A small task force will be set up to address the concerns identified in the survey.

30. Modernizing and streamlining statistical production is a topical challenge for most statistical offices. The work aims at greater efficiency that will allow improvement of data quality and produce new statistical information to meet the needs of policymakers. To advance the work, in 2010 the Conference of European Statisticians created a High-level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics (chaired by Statistics Netherlands), with the strong support and involvement of Eurostat, OECD and the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The purpose is to oversee and guide standardization of statistical production and to develop new innovative approaches. Linked to this work, the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians created a task force to develop recommendations for statistical business registers, which are a fundamental part of business architecture in improving efficiency of statistical production as well as coherence between statistics.

31. ECE has long experience in developing census recommendations, and it works with member States to promote efficiency and innovation in census-taking, in particular the use of registers. A Conference of European Statisticians seminar in 2012 will explore how technological and methodological innovations could make censuses more efficient in the production of high-quality data while controlling costs. The seminar will feed into the Statistical Commission's analysis of the experiences with recent censuses.

32. Measurement of people's well-being and social environment has gained increasing attention. In this context, work has been undertaken related to time-use surveys, gender equality and quality of employment. The need for better harmonization and timeliness of time-use statistics has led to the establishment of the Task Force on Time-use Surveys. In 2012, the Task Force will develop a set of guidelines with a view to harmonizing time-use surveys and improving comparability of time-use statistics. It will collect good practices to support countries in implementing these demanding surveys and will investigate ways of further increasing the policy relevance of time-use surveys and ways of more cost-effective survey-taking. A newly established task force on indicators of gender equality works towards a common set of indicators. The indicators on quality of employment will be further improved based on the outcome of the testing in countries, and operational guidelines will be developed for the calculation of indicators in practice.

33. All these initiatives will be conducted in close cooperation with major partners, such as Eurostat and OECD, and in coordination with other international initiatives in these areas. Particular attention will be paid to coordinating the work with the Statistical Division and its working groups to ensure global consultation.

IV. Challenges in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and statistical capacity-building

A. Overview

34. ECE works to enhance the capacity of the national statistical systems of the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and the South-East European countries in implementing international standards and guidelines. Particular attention is paid to adherence to the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics that provide the basis for a sound legal and institutional framework for national statistical systems.

35. The statistical capacity-building activities of ECE include:

(a) Global assessments of national statistical systems;

(b) Training workshops organized under capacity-building projects funded externally and by the United Nations Development Account;

(c) Advisory services by the ECE experts to address country-specific needs.

B. Global assessments of national statistical systems

36. The aim of the global assessments of national statistical systems is to provide a clear picture of the state of development of official statistics in a country. The assessments are carried out at the request of countries and they address both the institutional capacity and compliance with international standards, in particular with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. ECE conducts global assessments for the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia together with Eurostat and EFTA. The findings from global assessments provide a good basis for planning the ECE statistical capacity-building activities.

37. A global assessment is conducted by a small group of senior experts with a broad knowledge of official statistics. It usually consists of two country missions of about 5 to 10 working days. During the first mission, the experts meet with all major national producers of official statistics and collect information on the state and plans for the development of the statistical system. A draft report with concrete recommendations is discussed and approved during the second mission. The report is made publicly available.

38. The recommendations given in the assessment help the national authorities to better programme the long-term development of statistics. The results also guide the international donors in focusing their capacity-building activities according to the identified needs.

39. In 2010-2011, ECE, together with Eurostat and EFTA, carried out global assessments of the statistical systems of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. In the next stage, the Commission will discuss the national action plans designed to address the recommendations. In 2012, global assessments are planned in Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Tajikistan.

C. Developing the institutional framework of official statistics

40. The global assessments carried out so far have highlighted the following main challenges related to the institutional framework:

(a) Need for further updating of legislation to guarantee the professional independence of the statistical offices, strengthen national coordination and align the legislation with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;

(b) Defining the boundaries of the national systems of official statistics;

(c) Distinguishing between data collection for statistical and administrative purposes: it is of utmost importance for the reliability and credibility of statistics that the individual data collected are used exclusively for statistical purposes, as highlighted in the Fundamental Principles;

(d) Need for establishing a high-level advisory body, composed of main users, as an important institutional feature to ensure that the system of official statistics remains relevant.

41. As a result of global assessments, a number of countries have reviewed or are reviewing their national statistical legislation.

D. Statistical production

42. The global assessments also evaluate the organizational structure, the functioning of the statistical system and the organization of primary data collection and registers.

43. Modernizing statistical production and the organizational structure of statistical offices is a fundamental challenge for the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. It is expected that these countries will benefit from the work of the High-level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics to implement a vision for industrializing the future production and products of official statistics.

44. The global assessments highlight the following issues in statistical production:

(a) Centralization and modernization of statistical production and full integration and modernization of computer services to avoid duplication of work;

(b) Development of a comprehensive human resources and training policy to include staff mobility options, enlarge training to non-technical areas such as project and quality management as well as communication skills, and improve language skills to strengthen international cooperation;

(c) Introducing a comprehensive quality policy for official statistics and establishing a process for quality monitoring and management;

(d) Modernizing the communication and marketing strategy, establishing a special department responsible for this area, publishing advance release calendars, improving communication with the media and users of statistics and developing online dissemination databases.

45. ECE has organized a number of workshops for the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia on new dissemination technologies, such as the PC-Axis widely used by European statistical offices. Several countries have recently started using this software to improve dissemination of statistical data.

E. Economic statistics

46. In recent years, there has been significant progress in the capacity of the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to produce comparable national accounts data, and many of them have successfully introduced the internationally comparable economic activity classification, the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC Rev.3). The major challenge will be the switch to the 2008 SNA, while still working to implement a full system of accounts and introducing the new classification of economic activities (ISIC Rev.4). There is also a need to improve statistical business registers and develop new statistics for services, such as price deflators and volume measures.

47. According to an ECE survey carried out in 2010, the main challenges of the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and the South-East European countries in implementing the 2008 SNA include: capitalization of research and development, exhaustiveness of the accounts, including measures of non-observed economy, financial services, delineation of the public/private/government sectors, and development of price deflators and volume measures for

services. To this end, ECE has provided the countries with support, together with regional partners, on measuring the non-observed economy, government finance statistics and public and government sectors. Most countries have started to estimate the non-observed economy on a regular basis and following international guidelines.

48. A number of countries have requested more detailed guidance and recommendations for the development of national implementation plans towards the 2008 SNA. In 2011, ECE held a workshop in Kiev, with the Statistics Division and EFTA, to assist countries in drafting their implementation plans and to respond to the request of the Statistical Commission. The work will continue in 2012.

49. Further development of statistical business registers would help to improve the quality and coherence of economic statistics and streamline the production process. In most countries, business registers are not yet fully used and contain some problems of an administrative nature, such as inactive or non-existent units. Improved business registers could help to introduce sampling techniques which are not yet widely used. Thus, the ECE activities on modernizing statistical production will also address the development of statistical business registers.

50. The ECE assessment of the availability and international comparability of short-term statistics in the region of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia identified the lack of time series data and of seasonally adjusted series as a problem in most countries. Comprehensive short-term statistics on the service sector are rarely produced. In general, international comparability of short-term economic statistics, including price indices, requires further work. Since 2010, with financial support from the World Bank, ECE is carrying out a capacity-building programme to address these challenges.

F. Social and demographic statistics

51. The majority of the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia have successfully conducted the 2010 round of the population and housing censuses. The countries are also working to improve the measurement of migration.

52. In the period between 2006 and 2011, ECE organized a number of training workshops and meetings on population and housing censuses for the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund, and drafted the census recommendations of the Conference of European Statisticians. The preliminary results of censuses indicate improved quality of data compared to the previous round. As a result of implementing those recommendations, information was also collected on international migration. To date, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan have conducted their censuses. In Uzbekistan, a census based on 10 per cent of the population was carried out in April 2011. The Republic of Moldova, Turkmenistan and Ukraine are planning to conduct the census in 2012, and Georgia plans to do so in 2013. The countries will need further support for disseminating the results with modern technologies, such as dynamic web pages and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools.

53. The countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia have made notable progress in producing and disseminating data on international migration. Challenges remain, and the use of the immigration data of the destination countries

in measuring emigration should be improved. ECE will launch a clearing house on migration statistics for the above-mentioned countries to facilitate cross-checking of data between countries. A United Nations Development Account project with UNFPA and other partners has also resulted in a publication entitled *Statistics on International Migration: A Practical Guide for Countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, and in an online inventory, *Migratory*, presenting a broad range of sources of information on migration in Europe, Central Asia and North America.

54. According to an assessment of the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and the South-East European countries conducted in 2003, the region was struggling to establish regular gender statistics but data gaps existed. Since then, they have introduced new gender-relevant indicators and improved existing statistics for gender-sensitive policymaking. In response to the General Assembly resolutions on violence against women, the countries contributed to the development of a survey module on violence against women. The model was tested by several countries in different regions of the world and could become a standard data collection tool. The work is closely linked to the development of guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women undertaken by the Statistical Commission.

G. Environment and multidomain statistics

55. Close attention to environmental issues has increased the demand for internationally comparable statistics for environmental monitoring. The countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and the South-East European countries need to improve statistical processes for producing indicators on environment and sustainable development. The cooperation between various government institutions providing data on different environmental aspects should be strengthened to improve consistency of data. The ECE Intersectoral Task Force has been reviewing the indicators recommended by the *ECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (Indicator Guidelines)*. These include environmental indicators in key areas such as clean air, energy, drinking water, waste, forest biodiversity, sustainable transport, and so forth. The Task Force also considered additional indicators to be included in the *Indicator Guidelines*, namely, the indicator of environmental expenditures, agri-environmental indicators, energy and environment indicators, and new water and biodiversity indicators. Further work will also include the development of a core set of indicators that could be the basis for a regular collection of data. A newly launched United Nations Development Account project will support the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in addressing these problems. The activities will be coordinated with the Statistics Division, the European Environment Agency and Eurostat.

56. The availability and quality of data remains an issue for the Millennium Development Goal indicators, despite the notable progress achieved by the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and the South-East European countries. For each indicator, several different sources and methods are used which give different results. Therefore, discrepancies between international and national estimates still exist. A number of national statistical offices lack the capacity to analyse the Millennium Development Goal indicators, and quality issues hamper the use of the national Millennium Development Goal reports.

57. As the Millennium Development Goal indicators are spearheaded towards the least developed countries, they are not always relevant for the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and the South-East European countries. ECE has worked, in cooperation with those countries, ILO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNFPA, the Statistics Division and the World Bank, to harmonize the methodology and select relevant indicators that match the specific regional challenges. Several capacity-building activities on Millennium Development Goals have been organized to address existing data gaps and data quality issues related to the Millennium Development Goal indicators. ECE recently launched a regional Millennium Development Goal database to monitor progress and further improve the Millennium Development Goal indicators for these countries. This database provides up-to-date indicators for monitoring progress towards all eight Millennium Development Goals related to poverty, education, gender, child mortality, maternal health, diseases, environmental sustainability and global partnerships.

V. The way forward

58. The work will continue to focus on meeting countries' needs and priorities, in close cooperation with the major partners in the ECE region. Cooperation and coordination with other United Nations regional commissions will be further improved. The good practice of joint capacity-building projects in areas of common interest will continue, such as the joint United Nations Development Account projects.

59. ECE supports strengthening the cooperation and coordination with the Statistics Division and international organizations on the implementation of global standards adopted by the Statistical Commission, and to ensure global consultation on guidelines and recommendations developed under the umbrella of the Conference of European Statisticians. The cooperation with the Statistical Division and United Nations agencies will be further enhanced.

VI. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission

60. **The Commission may wish to comment on:**

(a) **The statistical work undertaken in the ECE region;**

(b) **The role of the global assessments for enhancing the capacity of national statistical systems of countries in implementing international standards and guidelines;**

(c) **The statistical capacity-building challenges identified in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, as outlined in section IV.**

United Nations E/CN.3/2012/19

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 December 2011

Original: English

Statistical Commission
Forty-third session
28 February-2 March 2012
Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Items for information: gender statistics

Gender statistics

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared at the request of the Statistical Commission at its forty-second session (see E/2011/24, chap. I.A). As requested by the Commission, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and the Statistics Division conducted a series of activities to implement the tasks specified in paragraphs 46 and 50 of the programme review of gender statistics (E/CN.3/2011/3). The report gives a summary of the activities undertaken so far by the Division and the Inter-agency and Expert Group and presents the workplan and strategies to strengthen the global gender statistics programme. The Commission is invited to comment on progress made by the Inter-agency and Expert Group and the Statistics Division and their future direction of work.

* E/CN.3/2012/1.

11-62530 (E) 060112

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I. Introduction

1. At its forty-second session, the Statistical Commission requested the Statistics Division to assume a leadership role in charting the path for the development of gender statistics globally and the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics to expand the scope of its work to include: (a) reviewing gender statistics with the aim of establishing a minimum set of gender indicators; (b) guiding the development of manuals and methodological guidelines for the production and use of gender statistics; and (c) serving as the coordination mechanism for the global programme on gender statistics.

2. The Commission also agreed to the tasks proposed in the programme review of gender statistics, including: (a) undertaking a comprehensive review of gender statistics programmes in countries; (b) establishing a minimum set of gender indicators for international compilation and dissemination; (c) continuing to hold annual meetings of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics; (d) convening biannually the Global Forum on Gender Statistics; and (e) offering technical support and advance methodological work for the development of gender statistics programmes in countries.

3. The present report provides a summary of the steps undertaken by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and the Statistics Division to fulfil the tasks specified above, including defining the strategies and plans for future work by all partners involved in the development of gender statistics.

II. Review of gender statistics programmes in countries

4. The programme review of gender statistics highlighted the need to identify best practices in setting up institutional arrangements for the production and use of gender statistics, based on a comprehensive review of national gender programmes. It included a request that the review be undertaken by the regional commissions and compiled into a global synthesis by the Statistics Division.

5. A questionnaire on a global review of gender statistics was developed by the Statistics Division in consultation with the regional commissions and presented and was discussed at the meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics in October 2011. A task team was established within the Inter-agency and Expert Group to finalize the questionnaire, which will be issued in the six official languages of the United Nations and used by the regional commissions to survey national statistical systems in their respective regions.

6. The main objective of the survey is to obtain information on how gender perspectives are mainstreamed into national statistical systems, including traditional areas of statistical production and new emerging areas, such as gender-based violence. The review is intended to provide the necessary elements to assess the most effective ways to integrate gender into the production and use of statistics, on the basis of which the best practices to be used by countries will be compiled.

7. The final version of the questionnaire is scheduled to be provided to the regional commissions by the end of November 2011. The survey will be carried out between December 2011 and February 2012, and the preliminary regional results will be presented in April 2012 at the Global Forum on Gender Statistics.

III. Establishment of a minimum set of gender indicators

8. Following the recommendations by the Statistical Commission, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics tasked its Advisory Group on Global Gender Statistics and Indicators Database with the identifying the indicators to be included in the minimum set of gender indicators. A subgroup of technical experts from national statistical systems and international agencies developed the list of indicators, based on the main criterion that the indicators selected should address key policy concerns as identified in the Beijing Platform for Action and other more recent international commitments.

9. The minimum set of indicators is meant to provide a basis from which to promote the production and compilation of gender statistics at the national level. The list includes indicators addressing the key issues in gender equality and women's empowerment that are common across countries and regions and is intended as a basic set, with indicators specific to regional and national contexts to be added by regional and national entities. For the purpose of gender analysis at the national level, and as a tool for national policy development and monitoring, the group agreed that more data would be needed, including cross-tabulations involving such variables as age group, rural/urban residence, race or ethnicity, and disability status.

10. The choice of indicators for the minimum set was guided by three criteria, including that an indicator should:

(a) Address relevant issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment;

(b) Be conceptually clear, easy to interpret and have an agreed international definition;

(c) Have been regularly produced by countries, with sufficient coverage to allow regional or national comparisons and tracking of progress over time.

In addition, the choice of indicators took into account existing lists of indicators agreed at the international level.

11. Based on the three criteria, the proposed indicators were categorized into three tiers as follows:

- Tier 1, including indicators that meet all three criteria
- Tier 2, including indicators that meet criteria (a) and (b), above
- Tier 3, includes indicators that meet criterion (a)

12. The Statistics Division has compiled detailed information on the definitions, sources and data availability for the selected indicators in order to determine their placement into the three tiers. Indicators in tier 3 are those that address key gender or women's empowerment issues, but for which the metadata and data collection mechanisms have yet to be fully developed. The Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics agreed to undertake further methodological work on those indicators so that clear data collection concepts and definitions can be established.

13. The list was reviewed and discussed at the meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics held in October 2011. The main recommendations

of the meeting were that: (a) operational definitions and indications of possible sources should be specified for each indicator in the list; (b) efforts should be made to assist countries to build national capacity to produce the minimum set of indicators; and (c) ongoing work on the development of international lists of indicators should be taken into account. In order to address point (b), the group agreed that the need to ensure the availability of resources and technical assistance to enable countries to produce the indicators should be explicitly included in the text of the Busan action plan for statistics, to be presented at the fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, to be held in Busan, Republic of Korea.

14. Given that the list is also meant to be the basis for international data compilation, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics discussed steps to establish a mechanism for the international agencies to regularly provide data and metadata to the Statistics Division, for data repository. The agreed list of indicators, incorporating comments and input from members of the Inter-agency and Expert Group, is presented in the annex to the present report.

IV. Initiative on harmonizing gender indicators

15. In an effort to accelerate progress in the production and use of gender indicators, an initiative was launched in April 2011 by the United States of America at the ministerial session on gender and development of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Through the gender data harmonization initiative, a list was proposed of internationally comparable gender indicators on education, employment and entrepreneurship so as to facilitate learning and assist national Governments in producing the necessary data to inform policies and programmes.

16. The Inter-agency and Expert Group considered the initiative and discussed ways to reconcile the list of indicators proposed under the initiative with the minimum set of gender indicators developed by the Inter-agency and Expert Group. The group reached a consensus and the minimum set of gender indicators incorporates all the indicators proposed under the initiative.

V. Development of manuals and guidelines

A. Gender statistics manual

17. A key concern in developing gender statistics has been the need for reference materials, training manuals and handbooks to be used by national statisticians. In 2009, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics recommended that the publication *Engendering Statistics*, produced by Statistics Sweden in 1996, be revised and updated to produce a new manual with the primary objective of encouraging gender mainstreaming in the production of all official statistics.

18. Following the recommendation of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, the Statistics Division has engaged in the preparation of the new manual, addressing also the request made by the Statistical Commission at its forty-second session for the development of manuals and methodological guidelines for the production and use of gender statistics. Two chapters of the manual, on

identifying data gaps in gender issues and gender statistics, and on integrating a gender perspective into data collection, were presented and discussed at the fifth meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group, held in New York from 4 to 6 October 2011. The remaining two chapters will be finalized by the end of 2011. The draft will then be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group, to be held in April 2012.

19. The manual will help statisticians to: (a) identify gaps in gender statistics and develop a coherent and comprehensive plan for the production of gender statistics; (b) ensure that survey instruments and censuses take into account gender issues and avoid gender-biases in measurement; (c) improve data analysis and data presentation and deliver gender statistics in a format that is easy to use by policymakers and planners.

20. The Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics provided comments and input on the structure and content of the manual. Experts from agencies and national statistical systems who are also members of the group will continue to provide input throughout the preparation of the manual in their respective areas of expertise. The group also agreed that a new section of the manual or a separate volume should be prepared containing a guide for compiling the agreed indicators to be used for the minimum set of gender indicators. The necessary resources and mechanisms for its production will need to be identified.

B. Guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women

21. The draft guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women were reviewed and discussed at a consultative meeting held on the premises of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Beirut from 8 to 11 November 2011. The guidelines provide a comprehensive methodological guidance on the selection of topics in surveys, sources of data, relevant statistical classifications, outputs, wording of questions and all other relevant issues related to conducting statistical surveys to measure violence against women. The meeting provided an opportunity to review the text in detail and for experts to provide important input for the improvement and completion of the text.

VI. Coordination of the Global Gender Statistics Programme

22. When the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics was first convened in December 2006, experts noted that, although many activities had been implemented in response to the growing demand for gender statistics, they were fragmented and had limited impact. As a result, gender statistics had not yet been institutionalized as part of the national and international statistical systems. In order to advance gender statistics at the global, regional and national levels, the Inter-agency and Expert Group recommended at that meeting the creation of a Global Gender Statistics Programme. Since its establishment, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics has helped to foster the development of gender statistics in countries and globally, by promoting training activities, data compilation and the dissemination and exchange of experiences and best practices and by improving international coordination and a dialogue with countries in all activities related to gender statistics.

A. Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics

23. At its forty-second session, the Statistical Commission recognized the strategic role of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and gave the Group an even stronger mandate, requesting that the scope of its work be expanded to cover the activities outlined above. The Commission also requested that the Inter-agency and Expert Group focus on serving as the coordination mechanism for the global gender statistics programme.

24. In order to fulfil the requests, the group met from 4 to 6 October 2011 to review the work carried out, define the programme of work to further the development of gender statistics and ensure that the priority actions identified by the Statistical Commission are being adequately implemented.

25. The agreed programme of work of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics for 2012 includes the following:

- Work on the minimum set of indicators for gender statistics, which comprises initiating the international data compilation of indicators in tier 1; promoting capacity-building activities to expand the data coverage of indicators in tier 2; and undertaking methodological development on indicators in tier 3.
- Development of manuals and guidelines, including completing the gender statistics manual and submitting the draft at the 6th meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group, to be held in April 2012; incorporating comments and input provided by experts at a consultative meeting held in November 2011 on the guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women and finalizing the guidelines by the end of 2012.
- Review of gender statistics programmes, including finalizing the common questionnaire; undertaking the regional collection of information; and compiling regional results into a global synthesis of regional reviews. The Statistics Division will also propose examples of best practices for gender statistics programmes to be agreed by the Inter-agency and Expert Group and used by countries as a reference.
- Capacity development activities, including providing technical assistance, advisory services and training to countries on ways to integrate a gender perspective into their national statistical systems.

26. At its October 2011 meeting, the Inter-agency and Expert Group agreed to establish a new subgroup investigating emerging issues in gender statistics and a new subgroup on the Busan gender data harmonization initiative. The following are the subgroups and advisory groups currently operating under the Inter-agency and Expert Group:

(a) Advisory Group on Survey on Gender Statistics Work, which incorporates the former advisory group on legislation; members include Canada (Chair), Ghana, India, Italy, the Philippines, the regional commissions, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Statistics Division;

(b) Advisory Group on Global Gender Statistics and Indicators Databases; members include Brazil, Canada, Ghana, Jordan, Malawi, Mexico, South Africa, the Philippines, Zimbabwe, the regional commissions, the World Bank, the United

Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Population Division, UN-Women, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), OECD and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (Chair);

(c) Advisory Group on Gender Statistics Training Activities and Curricula; members include Ghana, India, Jordan, Mexico, Nigeria, the Philippines (Chair), the United States, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN-Women, the World Bank and UNICEF;

(d) Subgroup on emerging issues, including the initiative to improve statistics on entrepreneurship; members include the Czech Republic, Egypt, India, Jordan, Mexico (Chair), the World Bank, OECD and the Statistics Division;

(e) Subgroup on the Busan gender data harmonization initiative; members include the United States, OECD, UN-Women, the World Bank and the Statistics Division.

27. The 6th meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics will be held in Amman in March/April 2012.

B. Global Forum on Gender Statistics

28. The Commission requested that the Global Forum on Gender Statistics be held biannually. The next Forum will be jointly organized by the Statistics Division and the National Statistical Office of Jordan and will be held in Amman in March/April 2012.

VII. Conclusions and the way forward

29. **The Statistical Commission might wish to take note of the work carried out by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and the Statistics Division during 2011 in implementing the requests of the Statistical Commission at its forty-second session on the improvement of gender statistics.**

30. **The Statistical Commission might also wish to take note of the proposed next steps as outlined in paragraph 25 above and covering the following areas:**

- **Work on the minimum set of gender indicators**
- **Development of manuals and guidelines**
- **Review of gender statistics programmes**
- **Capacity development activities**

Annex

Minimum set of gender indicators, by domain*

Table 1
List of gender indicators, by domain

Indicator number	*Indicator*	*Reference to Millennium Development Goals and targets**	*Reference to strategic objectives in Beijing Platform for Action**
I.	**Economic structures, participation in productive activities and access to resources**		
1	Average number of hours spent on unpaid domestic work, by sex Note: separate housework and child care if possible		C.2, F.1, H.3
2	Average number of hours spent on paid and unpaid work combined (total work burden), by sex		F.1, H.3
3	Labour force participation rates for persons aged 15-24 and 15+, by sex		F.1, H.3
4	Proportion of employed who are own-account workers, by sex	Goal 1, target B	F.2
5	Proportion of employed who are working as contributing family workers, by sex	Goal 1, target B	H.3
6	Proportion of employed who are employers, by sex		F.1
7	Percentage of firms owned by women		F.1, F.2
8	Percentage distribution of employed population by sector, each sex		F.5, H.3
9	Informal employment as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment, by sex		F.2, H.3
10	Youth unemployment, by sex		F.1
11	Proportion of population with access to credit, by sex		F.1, F.2
12	Proportion of adult population owning land, by sex		A.1, A.2
13	Gender gap in wages		F.1, F.5
14	Proportion of employed working part-time, by sex		F.5
15	Employment rate of persons aged 25-49 with a child under 3 living in a household and with no children living in the household, by sex		F.6
16	Proportion of children under age 3 in formal care		F.6
17	Proportion of population using the Internet, by sex	Goal 8, target F	F.3
18	Proportion of population using mobile/cellular telephones, by sex	Goal 8, target F	F.3
19	Access to mass media and information and communications technology		F.3

* List as agreed by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics at its 4th meeting, held from 4 to 6 October 2012.

Indicator number	Indicator	*Reference to Millennium Development Goals and targets*[a]	*Reference to strategic objectives in Beijing Platform for Action*[b]
II. Education			
30	Literacy rate of persons aged 15-24 years old, by sex	Goal 2	B.2, L.4,
31	Adjusted net enrolment ratio in primary education, by sex	Goal 2	B.1, L.4
32	Gross enrolment ratio in secondary education, by sex	Goal 3	B.1
33	Gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education, by sex		B.1
34	Gender parity index in enrolment at primary, secondary and tertiary levels	Goal 3	B.1, L.4
35	Share of female science, engineering, manufacturing and construction graduates at tertiary level		B.3, B.4, L.4
36	Proportion of females among third-level teachers or professors		B.4, L.4
37	Net intake in first grade of primary education, by sex		B.1
38	Primary education completion rate, by sex		B.1
39	Graduates from lower secondary education, by sex		B.1
40	Transition rate to secondary education, by sex		B.1
41	Education attainment of population aged 25 and over, by sex		B.1
III. Health and related services			
42	Contraceptive prevalence among women who are married or in a union, aged 15-49	Goal 5, target B	C.1, C.2
43	Under-5 mortality rate, by sex	Goal 4	C.1
44	Maternal mortality ratio	Goal 5, target A	C.1
45	Antenatal care coverage	Goal 5, target B	C.1
46	Proportion of births attended by skilled health professional	Goal 5, target A	C.1
47	Smoking prevalence among persons aged 15 and over, by sex		C.2
48	Proportion of adults who are obese, by sex		C.1, C.2
49	Women's share of population aged 15-49 living with HIV/AIDS	Goal 6, target A	C.3
50	Access to antiretroviral drug, by sex	Goal 6, target B and Goal 8, target E	C.3
51	Life expectancy at age 60, by sex		C.1, C.2
52	Adult mortality by cause and age groups		C.1, C.2
IV. Public life and decision-making			
53	Women's share of government ministerial positions		G.1
54	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	Goal 3	G.1
55	Women's share of managerial positions		F.1, F.5, G.1
56	Percentage of female police officers		I.2
57	Percentage of female judges		I.2

Indicator number	*Indicator*	*Reference to Millennium Development Goals and targets*[a]	*Reference to strategic objectives in Beijing Platform for Action*[b]
V.	**Human rights of women and the girl child**		
48	Proportion of women aged 15-49 subjected to physical or sexual violence in past 12 months by an intimate partner		D.1, D.2
49	Proportion of women aged 15-49 subjected to physical or sexual violence in past 12 months by persons other than an intimate partner		D.1, D.2
50	Prevalence of female genital mutilation/cutting (for relevant countries only)		I.2
51	Percentage of women aged 20-24 years old who were married or in a union before age 18		L.1., L.2
52	Adolescent fertility rate	Goal 5, target B	L.1., L.2

[a] Reference is made to the goals and targets under which there are identical or equivalent indicators.

[b] Available from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html.

Table 2
List of gender indicators related to national norms, by domain

Indicator number	*Indicator*	*Reference to Millennium Development Goals and targets*[a]	*Reference to the strategic objectives in the Beijing Platform for Action*[b]
I.	**Economic structures, participation in productive activities and access to resources**		
1	**Extent of country commitment to gender equality in employment**		F.1, F.5
1a	Whether or not country has ratified International Labour Organization Convention No. 100 on equal remuneration for women and men		F.1
1b	Whether or not country has ratified International Labour Organization Convention No. 111 on discrimination in employment and occupation		F.1, F.5
2	**Extent of country commitment to support reconciliation of work and family life**		F.1, F.5, F.6
2a	Whether or not country has ratified International Labour Organization Convention No. 156 on workers with family responsibilities		F.6
2b	Whether or not country has ratified International Labour Organization Convention No. 175 on part-time work		F.5
2c	Whether or not country has ratified International Labour Organization Convention No. 177 on home work		F.5
2d	Whether or not country has ratified International Labour Organization Convention No. 183 on maternity protection		F.1, F.6
3	**Length of maternity leave**		F.1, F.6
4	**Percentage of wages paid during maternity leave**		F.1, F.6
IV.	**Public life and decision-making**		
5	Presence of a gender quota for parliament (reserved seats and legal candidate quotas)	Goal 1	
6	Presence of a gender quota for parliament (voluntary party quotas)	Goal 1	
7	Existence of law on gender statistics		H.3
V.	**Human rights of women and the girl child**		
8	Whether or not reservation has been made to article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women		L.1
9	Existence of laws on domestic violence		D.1
10	Whether or not inheritance rights discriminate against women and girls		F.1, L.1
11	Legal minimum age at marriage, by sex		L.1

Note: Additional indicators will be identified to address social norms and attitudes; migration; institutional mechanisms; and critical areas, such as strategic objectives E, on women and armed conflict (already covered in part by indicators for Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)), J, on women and the media, and K, on women and the environment.
Indicators will be disaggregated, when possible, to address inequalities based on geographical area, rural/urban, income level, ethnicity, disabilities.

[a] Reference is made to the goals and targets under which there are identical or equivalent indicators.

[b] Available from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html.

United Nations E/CN.3/2012/20

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
5 December 2011

Original: English

Statistical Commission
Forty-third session
28 February-2 March 2012
Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Items for information: gender statistics

Follow-up to the recommendations of the Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on statistical indicators for measuring violence against women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Friends of the Chair group on statistical indicators for measuring violence against women submitted its first report to the Statistical Commission at its fortieth session in 2009 (E/CN.3/2009/13). Subsequently, the Statistical Commission requested the United Nations Statistics Division to initiate and conduct work on developing a set of guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women that would provide full methodological guidance regarding the selection of core and additional topics, sources of data, relevant statistical classifications, outputs, wording of the questions and all other pertinent issues for statistical surveys on measuring violence against women. The Statistics Division, in compliance with that request, developed the draft guidelines. The present report presents the proceedings and conclusions of the consultative meeting to review the draft guidelines, held in Beirut from 8 to 10 November 2011, as well as the outline of the guidelines themselves.

* E/CN.3/2012/1.

11-62183 (E) 211211

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1. In its resolution 61/143 on intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, the General Assembly requested the Statistical Commission to develop and propose, in consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women, and building on the work of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, a set of possible indicators on violence against women in order to assist Member States in assessing the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women. To that end, the Friends of the Chair group was established by the Statistical Commission at its thirty-ninth session (see E/2008/24, chap. I, sect. B, decision 39/116) and the membership was subsequently expanded in accordance with the instructions of the Bureau of the Statistical Commission. The group consists of representatives of 15 Member States (Australia, Bangladesh, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, Ghana, Italy, Mexico (the chair), Thailand, Turkey, and the United States of America), with the United Nations Statistics Division acting as secretariat. In addition, the following United Nations entities agreed to act as observers: Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat (now part of UN-Women), Special Rapporteur on Violence against women, its causes and consequences, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and World Health Organization.

2. The Friends of the Chair presented its first report to the Statistical Commission at its fortieth session for discussion (E/CN.3/2009/13). The Commission adopted the proposed set of indicators presented in the report as an interim set and first step, and requested the Friends of the Chair to continue the work on finalization of the indicators (E/2009/24, chap. I, sect. B, decision 40/110).

3. Complying with the Commission's request, the Friends of the Chair conducted a meeting, co-organized by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía de México (reflecting Mexico's role as chair of the Friends of the Chair) and the United Nations Statistics Division, in Aguascalientes, Mexico, from 9 to 11 December 2009.[1] The major conclusions of the meeting refer to the finalization of the set of core statistical indicators for measuring violence against women using statistical surveys and the development of guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women.

4. In response to the request from the Friends of the Chair, the United Nations Statistics Division undertook the preparation of the draft guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women. The draft guidelines were designed to provide comprehensive methodological guidance on the selection of topics, sources of data, relevant statistical classifications, outputs, wording of the questions and all other relevant issues related to conducting statistical surveys to measure violence against women. The draft consists of six chapters: (a) role of statistical surveys on violence against women; (b) concepts and definitions of violence against women; (c) planning a statistical survey on violence against women; (d) questionnaire design; (e) survey implementation; and (f) data processing and analysis. In addition, the draft contains several annexes, including one (annex III) that presents

[1] The report of the meeting (ESA/STAT/AC.193/L.3) is available at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/vaw/docs/finalreport.pdf.

recommended tabulations based on the set of statistical indicators developed by the Friends of the Chair and endorsed by the Statistical Commission.

5. For the purposes of ensuring a comprehensive first review of the draft guidelines, the Statistics Division organized a consultative meeting at the premises of ESCWA in Beirut from 8 to 10 November 2011. The meeting was attended by seven members of the Friends of the Chair: Mexico (chair), Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Egypt, Ghana, Italy and Turkey. Armenia, Kenya and Oman also participated, as well as ECE, ESCWA and the newly established UN-Women.

6. The format of the meeting was designed to allow for a detailed review of the draft guidelines. Each of the seven sessions — focusing on individual chapters and annex III — was opened by an introductory statement, followed by a presentation by a lead discussant, a general discussion and a section-by-section review of the draft text.

7. The comprehensive report of the meeting is available as a background document of the Statistical Commission. The major points agreed upon during the meeting can be summarized as follows:

(a) The draft text of the guidelines was assessed to be sound and comprehensive and in line with the needs of countries that would benefit from guidelines on measuring violence against women. The guidelines are being developed in the context of the work of the Friends of the Chair and are based on the existing and adopted list of statistical indicators for measuring violence against women. The work on the guidelines was coordinated with the work on developing a statistical module under the auspices of the regional commissions project on eradicating violence against women,[2] a project that was also guided by the Friends of the Chair;

(b) Comments and suggestions raised during the meeting can be grouped in several categories: (i) requests for reorganization of the structure of several chapters and repositioning of sections within a specific chapter; (ii) requests that the guidelines be more specific in terms of addressing surveys on violence against women, avoiding general instructions that may not be applicable in this specific case (such as, for example, the use of hot-deck editing); (iii) removing the phrasing of the questions from the body of the text and placing it in the annex, in the form of a model questionnaire; (iv) using the module developed by the regional commissions project as a model questionnaire; (v) limiting the recommended tabulations to the ones that satisfy the indicators as adopted by the Friends of the Chair; and (vi) specific comments on the draft text.

8. With regard to the recommended tabulations to be included in the guidelines, the meeting concluded that they should be limited to those that would allow for generation of the indicators adopted by the Friends of the Chair, namely:

(a) Total and age-specific rate of women subjected to physical violence in the last 12 months by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency;

[2] The description of the project is available at www.un.org/regionalcommissions/rcwomen.html.

(b) Total and age-specific rate of women subjected to physical violence during lifetime by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency;

(c) Total and age-specific rate of women subjected to sexual violence in the last 12 months by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency;

(d) Total and age-specific rate of women subjected to sexual violence during lifetime by severity of violence, relationship to the perpetrator and frequency;

(e) Total and age-specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months by frequency;

(f) Total and age-specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by current or former intimate partner during lifetime by frequency;

(g) Total and age-specific rate of women subjected to psychological violence in the past 12 months by the intimate partner;

(h) Total and age-specific rate of women subjected to economic violence in the past 12 months by the intimate partner;

(i) Total and age-specific rate of women subjected to female genital mutilation.

For the computation of the appropriate prevalence rates in the recommended tabulations, the meeting emphasized that the denominator for indicators (a) to (d) and (i) should be the total number of women age 15 and above, and for indicators (e) to (h) the total number of ever-partnered women.

9. The completion of the work on the guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women will require the incorporation of all the inputs from the consultative meeting, which is expected to be accomplished by the end of January 2012. This will be followed by the final round of virtual review by all members and observers of the Friends of the Chair group as well as other participants in the consultative meeting, after which the draft will be submitted for formal editing and printing.

United Nations E/CN.3/2012/21

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
6 December 2011

Original: English

Statistical Commission
Forty-third session
28 February-2 March 2012
Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Items for information: Washington Group on Disability Statistics

Report of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its forty-second session (see E/2011/24, chap. I.A), the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics. This report presents the work completed by the Washington Group as well as its workplan for 2012. The Commission is requested to express its views on the findings and conclusions of the Washington Group and the proposal for its future work. In particular, the Washington Group is seeking the Commission's approval on its workplan for 2012.

* E/CN.3/2012/1.

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Report of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics

I. Introduction

1. In June 2001, the United Nations International Seminar on Measurement of Disability recommended that principles and standard forms for indicators of disability be developed for use in censuses. There was a broad consensus on the need for population-based measures of disability for country use and for international comparisons. This work was greatly needed because data on disability, especially in developing countries, are scarce and often of poor quality. Furthermore, international comparability is often lacking, even among developed countries. As a result, the Washington Group on Disability Statistics was formed to address the urgent need.

2. The main purpose of the Washington Group is, therefore, the promotion and coordination of international cooperation in the area of health statistics focusing on disability measures suitable for censuses and national surveys. Its major objective is to provide basic necessary information on disability that is comparable throughout the world. More specifically, the Washington Group set a goal of developing a short set of disability measures, suitable for use in censuses, sample-based national surveys or other statistical formats, for the primary purpose of informing policy on the equalization of opportunities. A second priority is to recommend one or more extended sets of survey items to measure disability, or guidelines for their design, to be used as components of population surveys or as supplements to specialty surveys. These extended sets of survey items are intended to be related to the short set of disability measures. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) has been used as the basic framework for the development of the sets. All disability measures recommended by the group, short or extended, are accompanied by descriptions of their technical properties, and methodological guidance is given on their implementation and their applicability to all population subgroups. The Washington Group disseminates its work products globally through the Internet (www.cdc.gov/nchs/washington_group.htm) and scientific publications.

II. Progress report on work completed

A. Meetings and collaborations

3. The Washington Group has held 11 annual meetings since its inception: 18-20 February 2002 in Washington, D.C.; 9 and 10 January 2003 in Ottawa; 19 and 20 February 2004 in Brussels; 29 September-1 October 2004 in Bangkok; 21-23 September 2005 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; 10-13 October 2006 in Kampala; 19-21 September 2007 in Dublin; 29-31 October 2008 in Manila; 7-9 October 2009 in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania; 3-5 November 2010 in Luxembourg; and 14-16 November 2011 in Southampton, Bermuda. Annual meetings are held in major geographic regions to facilitate participation, especially by developing countries.

4. The Washington Group has sought to foster international collaboration and in particular to ensure that the efforts of the group are broadly based and inclusive of

voices from developing countries from every region of the world. Thus, representatives of national statistical authorities, disabled people's organizations and other international organizations participate in the Washington Group. Since its inception, representatives of national statistical offices in 123 countries have participated in the Washington Group. Representatives from 89 countries have attended at least one annual meeting, and representatives from 58 countries have attended more than one annual meeting. Current members of the Washington Group include 118 national statistical offices, 7 international organizations, 6 organizations that represent persons with disabilities, the Statistics Division and other United Nations affiliates (see annex I).

5. The Washington Group has worked with the Statistics Division, WHO, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the International Labour Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, Eurostat, the Norway-based research institute SINTEF and others to promote a unified approach to disability measurement. Several World Bank data instruments in India and Uzbekistan have been heavily influenced by the work of the Washington Group, and SINTEF has been working in Africa to conduct independent tests of Washington Group questions. The Washington Group has also been informed that its question set has been pretested or added to surveys in more than 30 countries. The Washington Group continues to work with the World Bank in matters of common interest and in attempts to secure funding for further activities related to the testing and development of extended sets of questions on disability in other regions.

6. The Washington Group continues to collaborate with ECE, WHO and Eurostat on the Budapest Initiative on Measuring Health Status. The final version of the Budapest Initiative's question set on health status was adopted in November 2010 at the joint meeting of the Washington Group and the Budapest Initiative in Luxembourg and subsequently presented to Eurostat — as part of the Budapest Initiative — for inclusion in the next round of the European Health Interview Survey.

7. Discussions have continued with ESCAP to explore the development of an implementation project. The Washington Group continues to seek the support of the World Bank in continuing the development of disability measures. Discussions have been held with the Department of Social and Economic Affairs regarding the use of the Washington Group questions for the purpose of monitoring the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. New contacts have been established in the Middle East with the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS).

8. At the eleventh meeting of the Washington Group a more formal collaboration was arranged between the Washington Group and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) regarding the development of the extended sets of questions on child disability.

9. WHO and the World Bank, in its *World Report on Disability* launched in June 2011, proposed the following recommendations to enhance the availability, comparability and quality of data on disability, which reflect directly on the work of the Washington Group:

- That improved national disability statistics be incorporated into national statistics programmes through the routine collection of disability data
- That appropriate tools — quantitative and qualitative methodologies — be developed to improve and expand data collection on disability
- That national population census data be collected according to the recommendations from the Washington Group on Disability Statistics and the Statistical Commission
- That the questions developed by the Washington Group and the Budapest Initiative be used to provide a core set that can be expanded to meet country needs
- That extended measures of disability be developed and tested for use in population surveys or as the core of a disability survey, as initiated by the Washington Group and the Budapest Initiative
- That national statistical offices be encouraged to actively participate in the Washington Group as a means of improving data quality, comparability and availability

10. A representative of the Washington Group participated in the world release of the report at United Nations Headquarters in New York in June 2011 and in the release of the report in the United States of America in Washington, D.C., in September 2011. The Washington Group is committed to addressing the recommendations of the report. As noted below, the 2012 workplan contains items that address the use of the short set questions for data collection and the analysis of the resulting data.

B. Recent activities and major achievements

1. Question development

11. A major accomplishment of the Washington Group has been the development, testing and endorsement of a short set of questions that can be used on censuses and surveys. At the sixth annual meeting of the Washington Group in Kampala, test results from 15 countries (see annex II) were reported and the short set of questions on disability was endorsed by the 23 countries and 5 international agencies in attendance. The set comprised questions on six core functional domains: seeing, hearing, walking, cognition, self-care and communication. These questions were based on the model of disability inherent in ICF and contained a particular emphasis on international comparability. On the basis of information obtained from the country reports submitted by the primary country representatives between the ninth and eleventh meetings of the Washington Group, 31 countries indicated that the short set of questions, or some variant thereof, were included in the recent census round. Testing procedures designed for the evaluation of internationally comparable question sets were developed for the use of the Washington Group. The testing procedures include both qualitative — cognitive testing — and quantitative methodologies. Training and technical assistance has been provided to countries with regard to conducting the Washington Group tests and, more generally, with regard to disability data collection methods.

12. The Washington Group has also developed an extended set of functioning questions to be used as components of population surveys, as supplements to surveys or as the core of a disability survey for use in surveys that expand on the short set. In collaboration with ESCAP, the Washington Group conducted standardized cognitive testing of the extended question set in nine countries (Cambodia, Canada, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mongolia, the Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka and the United States). Standardized field testing of the extended question set was conducted in six countries (Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mongolia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

13. In February 2011, an expert group meeting was held in Bangkok to review the results of a second round of cognitive testing of the Washington Group/ESCAP extended question set to measure disability through surveys. The objectives were to discuss the results of the second round of cognitive testing, particularly with regard to the domains of communication, hearing, affect, pain and fatigue; to further train senior statisticians from the Asia-Pacific region on the skills required to undertake the analysis of cognitive interviews; and to discuss future areas of work on disability data collection and measurement.

14. In collaboration with the Budapest Initiative, a final version of a question set on health state — a subset of the extended set on functioning — was submitted to Eurostat for inclusion on the European Health Interview Survey.

2. Workshops and technical assistance

15. In August and September 2009, at the request of the World Bank, the Washington Group assisted the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics by holding a training workshop designed to provide an understanding of disability and functioning using the ICF-based Washington Group approach and by implementing the Washington Group short set of questions in the country's national Household Income and Expenditure Survey and in preparation for the 2010 census.

16. A regional workshop was held in collaboration with ESCAP in December 2009 in Bangkok. The workshop aimed to increase participants' knowledge of the implementation of cognitive and pilot tests for questionnaire design by disseminating the results of the cognitive and field tests of the Washington Group/ESCAP extended question set to measure disability through surveys, and to further advocate the ICF-based approach for disability data collection through training on census and survey data collection.

17. In July 2010, the Washington Group held a workshop in collaboration with ESCAP that focused on training country participants in cognitive survey methods and presented the results from the disability study's pilot and cognitive tests. The workshop was attended by representatives from national statistical offices in Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mongolia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

18. A training workshop for question evaluation and cognitive interview methodologies was held in Muscat in October 2010. The objectives were to inform researchers of, and train them in, current cognitive interview methodology and question evaluation techniques with respect to the Washington Group extended set of disability questions. The workshop was hosted by the Ministry of National Economy and was attended by 15 representatives from the national statistics offices of Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen and Palestine.

19. In December 2010, AITRS sponsored a disability seminar in Damascus. Its specific goal was to share knowledge with representatives from national statistics offices in Arab countries on disability definition and measurement. The seminar was attended by 22 representatives from the national statistics offices of Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen and Palestine.

20. In May 2011, representatives from the Washington Group secretariat participated in a training workshop sponsored by AITRS in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. Its aim was to train representatives from national statistics offices in Arab countries to understand and operationalize disability measures developed by the Washington Group. The training workshop was attended by 35 representatives from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East and from the national statistics offices of Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates.

3. Current activities and the eleventh annual meeting in Bermuda

21. The Washington Group is monitoring the use of the short set in the 2010 round of censuses. Information on the questions used and the resulting estimates of disability was requested from the Washington Group, and preliminary analyses of the country results were presented at the eleventh meeting. Of particular interest was the impact of modifications to the question set that had been made by certain countries. Discussion focused on how these findings could be used to better inform countries about the collection of disability information and the potential impact of question wording. Work in this area is part of the plan for 2012.

22. The Washington Group is continuing to work on the extended set of disability questions on functioning. The question set was added to the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) conducted by the United States and data is now available for analysis. Preliminary findings were presented at the meeting. The discussion focused on ways in which the data could be used to better understand the question set and to provide guidance for analysis. This project was adopted as part of the workplan for 2012.

23. Two working groups — one on the development of an extended set for measuring disability among children and youth and one on measuring the environment as it relates to functioning — presented the work accomplished in the previous year. The working group on measuring disability among children and youth, chaired by members of the National Institute for Statistics in Italy, presented a well-received proposal for the development of the extended set for children that included a conceptual framework and examples of ways to operationalize it. A delegate from UNICEF attended the meeting and presented information on the survey items used in the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys. A formal collaboration was arranged between the Washington Group and UNICEF to work on the development of the extended set of questions on child disability. The working group investigating environmental factors, chaired by the National Center for Health Statistics of the United States, also presented its work, which consisted of a conceptual framework and related question sets. In addition, a session was held on ways in which participation could be addressed more directly. The working group was encouraged to continue work in both areas.

III. Workplan for 2012

24. At the eleventh meeting, the Washington Group agreed to its workplan for 2012. Among other items, the plan delegates specific responsibilities to the steering committee and the working groups that meet throughout the year via e-mail and telephone conferences. Next steps for the steering committee and the working groups include the following:

(a) Work on the short set questions:

(i) A working group will prepare a paper for publication reporting on the use of the Washington Group short set of questions — and other measures of disability — and the impact on the data obtained of wording changes to the standard set;

(ii) A working group will prepare a presentation on the analysis for the twelfth meeting;

(b) Work on the extended sets of questions on functioning:

(i) Interested Washington Group members will continue analyses of data from NHIS and prepare a paper for publication on analysis of the NHIS data;

(ii) The members will prepare a presentation on the analysis for the twelfth meeting;

(c) Work on extended sets of questions on child disability:

(i) The working group on child disability will continue to develop its proposal on the question set for children and develop a proposed question set;

(ii) The working group will collaborate with UNICEF on the development of the extended set of child disability measures;

(iii) The working group will prepare documents on the development of measures of child disability for the twelfth meeting;

(d) Work on extended sets of questions on environmental factors and participation:

(i) A working group will continue work on the development of the conceptual framework and develop a proposed set, or sets, of questions;

(ii) A working group will prepare documents on the development of measures of environmental factors and participation for the twelfth meeting.

25. The twelfth Washington Group meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held in October 2012 in Beijing.

IV. Points for action by the Commission

26. The Commission may wish to (a) express its views on the activities and achievements of the Washington Group as described in the progress report; (b) urge support through United Nations regional offices for training, cognitive and field testing, technical assistance and regional workshops; and (c) consider and approve the draft workplan of the Washington Group for 2012, as described in section III.

Annex I

Membership of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics

1. Current representatives from national statistical authorities include 118 countries and territories: Albania; Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Armenia; Aruba; Australia; Austria; Bangladesh; Barbados; Belgium; Bermuda; Bolivia (Plurinational State of); Botswana; Brazil; Bulgaria; Burundi; Cambodia; Canada; Chad; Chile; China; Colombia; Côte d'Ivoire; Costa Rica; Croatia; Cuba; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Denmark; the Dominican Republic; Egypt; Estonia; Fiji; Finland; France; Gambia; Germany; Ghana; Greece; Guatemala; Hungary; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Iraq; Ireland; Israel; Italy; Jamaica; Japan; Jordan; Kazakhstan; Kenya; Kuwait; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Latvia; Lebanon; Lesotho; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malawi; Maldives; Malta; Mauritius; Mexico; Micronesia (Federated States of); Mongolia; Morocco; Mozambique; the Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Oman; Pakistan; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Qatar; Romania; Rwanda; Saint Lucia; Saudi Arabia; Serbia and Montenegro; Sierra Leone; Singapore; Slovakia; Slovenia; South Africa; Spain; Sri Lanka; Sweden; Syrian Arab Republic; Thailand; Tonga; Trinidad; Tunisia; Turkey; Tuvalu; Uganda; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United Republic of Tanzania; United States of America; Uruguay; Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of); Viet Nam; Zambia; Zimbabwe; Curaçao; Hong Kong, China; Macao, China; Occupied Palestinian Territory; and Sint Maarten. In the past, the Bahamas, Comoros, Ecuador, Nigeria and Turks and Caicos Islands also participated.

2. Past and present representatives of international organizations representing persons with disabilities include the European Disability Forum, Rehabilitation International, the Inter-American Institute on Disability, the African Rehabilitation Institute and the International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus. Past and present representatives of national organizations representing persons with disabilities include the National Disability Authority in Ireland, the Coordination Office for the Integration of Displaced Persons in Brazil, the National Secretariat for Social Integration of the Disabled in Panama, the Disabled Organization for Legal Affairs and Social Economic Development in the United Republic of Tanzania, the Association for Persons with Cerebral Palsy in Mexico, the Puerto Rico Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Office of the Ombudsman for People with Disabilities in Puerto Rico, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research in the United States and the National Union of Persons with Disabilities of Uganda. Past and present representatives of organizations representing persons with disabilities in Bermuda include Age Concern, Bermuda Resources for the Advancement of Children with Special Needs, the Bermuda Autism Support and Education Society, the Bermuda Society for the Blind and the Bermuda Hospitals Board, while Government organizations in Bermuda include Community Rehabilitation-Occupational and Physiotherapy Services, the National Office for Seniors and the Physically Challenged, the Human Rights Commission and the Department of National Drug Control.

3. Other international organizations that have previously participated or currently participate in the Washington Group include Eurostat, Partnership Health of the

European Union, the International Labour Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Development Project, the World Bank, the World Health Organization, the World Health Organization Family of International Classifications Collaborating Centre, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Economic Commission for Europe and the Statistics Division.

Annex II

Additional accomplishments of the Washington Group to 2009

Question testing

1. In evaluating questions for both the Budapest Initiative and the Washington Group, three large-scale evaluation studies were conducted. The first study was an evaluation of the Washington Group short set of six disability questions intended for censuses. Fifteen countries took part in this study: Argentina, Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Gambia, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mexico, Paraguay, Philippines, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Viet Nam. The results of this first evaluation have been published.[a] The Washington Group extended set of questions on functioning and the Budapest Initiative health state set were analysed in two separate studies: the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) study (see www.unescap.org/stat/disability/analysis) and the Granada Group Study.

2. With the backing of ESCAP, an extended set of questions was cognitively and field tested in six south-east Asian countries: Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Philippines and Sri Lanka. A joint meeting of the Washington Group, the Budapest Initiative and ESCAP convened in May 2009 analysed the data and cognitive and preliminary field test results were presented at the ninth meeting of the Washington Group in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, in 2009. Efforts to finalize an extended set of disability questions were presented at the tenth meeting of the Washington Group, held in Luxembourg in November 2010.

3. The Granada Group, consisting of France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the United States of America, took a somewhat different approach in looking at the same set of extended questions. While the group collected cognitive data from qualitative interviews and analysed it along the same lines as the ESCAP project, their approach focused on the further development of question evaluation methodology and best practices in cognitive research methodology.

Regional workshops

4. The Washington Group organized and held two regional workshops in 2005 in Africa and Latin America. These workshops were primarily directed towards countries in the region that were interested in including disability questions in their national censuses. The workshops familiarized countries in the region with the short set of Washington Group questions on disability, the accompanying rationale and the procedures for testing the questions. These workshops helped to build capacity for data collection on disability in many developing countries.

5. The Washington Group has participated in the following additional regional workshops:

- A training workshop on disability statistics for member countries of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, held by the

[a] Kristen Miller et al, "Results of a cross-national structures cognitive interviewing protocol to test measures of disability", *Quality & Quantity*, vol. 45, No. 4, (June 2011).

Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in Bishkek, 13-15 December 2006. The aim of the training workshop was to introduce participants to the best practices on disability statistics and to develop knowledge of methodologies of measurement of the health status of the population. The workshop was organized for health statistics directors and staff engaged in the measurement of disabilities in the national statistical offices and ministries of health in Central Asia and Azerbaijan.

- A training workshop on census management held jointly by ECE and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Sarajevo, 18-22 February 2008.

- A workshop on strengthening capacity for disability measurement across South Asia sponsored by the World Bank and a regional workshop on promoting disability data collection through the 2010 population and housing censuses sponsored by the United Nations in Bangkok in April 2008.

- A regional training workshop on population and housing censuses for South-East European countries sponsored jointly by ECE and UNFPA in Ohrid, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in November 2008. The workshop was organized for senior professionals and experts from the statistical offices of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Kosovo. The Washington Group was responsible for a full-day training session including the measurement of disability in censuses and interpreting and understanding disability as measured using the Washington Group short set of questions.

United Nations E/CN.3/2012/22

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
6 December 2011

Original: English

Statistical Commission
Forty-third session
28 February-2 March 2012
Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Items for information: international merchandise trade statistics

International merchandise trade statistics

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared at the request of the Statistical Commission at its forty-second session (see E/2011/24, chap. I.A). The report provides a description of the activities undertaken in response to the requests made by the Commission regarding the implementation of the new recommendations for collection and compilation of international merchandise trade statistics, as contained in *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions, 2010*. The report presents the draft *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual, Rev.1*, which is available as a background document. The compilers manual was prepared by the Statistics Division through global consultation and with the support of experts from national statistical offices, national customs administrations and international organizations. The Commission may wish to take note of this report.

* E/CN.3/2012/1.

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I. Introduction

1. At its forty-first session, the Statistical Commission adopted *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts And Definitions, 2010* (IMTS 2010)[1] and endorsed the proposed implementation programme, including the preparation of the revision of *International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Compilers Manual*[2] and supporting technical assistance activities (see E/2010/24, chap. I.B, decision 41/103, para. (b)). In the same decision (para. (c)), the Commission requested the Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics and the Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics to continue their work, focus on the implementation of IMTS 2010 and give due consideration to national circumstances, the harmonization of national and regional compilation practices and the conduct of related comparison studies.

2. The Commission requested that greater attention be given to the strengthening of institutional arrangements in countries to ensure that proper national coordination mechanisms existed for the compilation of high-quality international merchandise trade statistics; and also requested that cooperation be ensured with compilers of statistics on international trade in services, the balance of payments and national accounts (decision 41/103, para. (d)).

3. Also in decision 41/103, the Commission recognized the importance of the United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database (UN Comtrade) as the global database and information platform on international merchandise trade and requested the Statistics Division to enhance its features and metadata (para. (c)); and advised that, in the future research agenda, due consideration should be given to emerging trade policy needs and globalization issues and in that context, also advised that linkage with business statistics and measuring merchandise trade in terms of value added be further explored.

4. The present report describes the activities carried out in response to the Commission's requests (sect. II); provides an overview of the revised compilation guidance (sect. III); and outlines the further implementation programme regarding the new recommendations on international merchandise trade statistics, including linking of trade and business statistics and the development of practical guidance for the calculation of external trade indices. The concluding section highlights key elements of the report's response to the Commission's request.

II. Activities carried out in response to the decision of the Commission

A. Questionnaire on the plans for implementation of IMTS 2010

5. As a first response to the Commission's requests, the Statistics Division, in May 2010, informed countries about the newly adopted international recommendations contained in IMTS 2010 while strongly encouraging them to establish implementation plans, including efficient and coordinated institutional arrangements. The Statistics Division attached a short survey on IMTS 2010

[1] Series M, No. 52/Rev.3 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.10.XVII.13).

[2] Series F, No. 87 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.XVII.17).

implementation, to which a total of 100 countries had replied. Almost one third of countries expected to implement most of the new recommendations for reporting year 2011 and another third for reporting year 2012. Countries pointed out that, in particular, cooperation with other agencies and guidance on how to implement the recommendations were critical factors for successful implementation. They stressed the importance of the revised Compilers Manual.[3]

B. Revision of the IMTS Compilers Manual

6. The IMTS Compilers Manual, developed by the Statistics Division and the Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics, contains revised compilation guidance for international merchandise trade statistics. A draft is provided for information as a background document to this report.

Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (EG-IMTS)

7. The Expert Group, which consists of merchandise trade experts from developed and developing countries and from international organizations, developed the outline of the Compilers Manual during 2010, and agreed on the contents of its individual chapters at its first virtual meeting, held from 12 January to 28 February 2011.[4] The Statistics Division then drafted the chapters of the Manual and organized two more virtual meetings with the Expert Group to discuss the first two sets of draft chapters. Many members of the Expert Group contributed actively by providing examples, draft text and comments. At its fourth and final virtual meeting, held in mid-December 2011, the Expert Group endorsed the draft IMTS Compilers Manual, subject to adoption of several agreed amendments and clarifications. The Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics was informed of work conducted at all stages of the drafting process. Task Force members also reviewed, commented on and contributed to the draft chapters during the virtual meetings.

Worldwide consultation with countries

8. A worldwide consultation on the draft annotated outline of the IMTS Compilers Manual was held between March and May 2011. A total of 86 countries (or areas) participated in this consultation and completed the questionnaire. The results showed that the overwhelming majority of countries approved of the suggested contents of the individual chapters. Comments were provided by a majority of the participating countries which often gave very detailed feedback on the different chapters and on individual issues. The comments were an important and useful input to, and a source of guidance for, the drafting process.[5]

[3] The detailed report on the responses to the Statistics Division questionnaire on plans in respect of IMTS 2010 implementation is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/EG-IMTS/EG-IMTS%20web%20announcement.htm.

[4] The virtual meeting is conducted as an electronic discussion over a set time period. For more details, see report of the first virtual meeting on the update of the IMTS Compilers Manual, 12 January-28 February 2011, also available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/EG-IMTS/EG-IMTS%20web%20announcement.htm.

[5] See report on the results of the worldwide consultation on the annotated draft outline of the updated IMTS Compilers Manual, also available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/EG-IMTS/EG-IMTS%20web%20announcement.htm.

Meeting on compilation issues in December 2011

9. A meeting on compilation issues of IMTS, held in Mexico City from 6 to 9 December 2011, brought together compilers from developed and developing countries and from international organizations to review all the draft chapters of the revised Manual and to provide further comments and suggestions, including examples, for its improvement.

C. Request for additional data items and update of UN Comtrade

10. Following the adoption of IMTS 2010, the Statistics Division and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) revised their data request to countries[6] so as to allow for inclusion of the following four new data items: (a) country of consignment as second partner country or area, (b) imports free on board (f.o.b.) as second value for imports, (c) mode of transport and (d) customs procedure code (or applicable transaction code).[7] The Statistics Division is in the process of upgrading its UN Comtrade database in order to accommodate these new data items. Details on their dissemination and presentation will be further discussed with the Expert Group and the Task Force.

11. The impact of the financial crises on global trade highlighted the need for short-term analysis of specific trade flows. In this respect, many countries already release detailed monthly trade data, but these data are not readily available at the global level and in the same standardized way as the annual data. To meet this user demand, the Statistics Division requested countries in April 2010 to (a) make available detailed trade data for each of the first three months of 2010 for testing purposes and (b) supply such detailed trade data on a regular basis beginning with data for January 2011. A total of 88 countries responded positively to this initiative. The Statistics Division established a pilot processing and dissemination system and now processes a selected list of countries on a regular basis. Disseminated monthly trade data, with the same quality and functionality as are associated with the UN Comtrade system are expected to become available to the general public by 2013-2014.

D. Global Forum on Trade Statistics, seminars and workshops

12. In February 2011, the Statistics Division and Eurostat, in collaboration with the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), organized the Global Forum on Trade Statistics on the premises of the World Trade Organization in Geneva.[8] The event brought together almost 200 policymakers, researchers and trade statisticians from over 70 countries.

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[6] The United Nations Statistics Division and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) cooperate in the collection of annual merchandise trade data. OECD requests the data from its member countries and immediately forwards the data received to the Statistics Division.

[7] The revised data request is available from the Statistics Division website at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/IMTS/datacollection.htm.

[8] Detailed documentation, prepared by the Statistics Division, Eurostat, the World Trade Organization and OECD, is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/trade/s_geneva2011/outcome.htm.

The Global Forum followed up on the Statistical Commission's 2010 decisions and made explicit recommendations with respect to improving the relevance of international trade statistics. Relevance could be enhanced through good-quality and more detailed statistics of international trade in services, by connecting and integrating trade statistics with other economic statistics and through provision of developing measures for the geographical fragmentation of the production processes. The Forum urged closer cooperation among the national agencies involved in the compilation and dissemination of international trade statistics in realizing these improvements.

13. As a direct follow-up to the Global Forum, the Statistics Division organized regional seminars in Vilnius, in September 2011, and in Beijing, in October 2011, involving the participation of a total of almost 200 statisticians from 41 countries or areas in Eastern and Southern Europe and Asia. The participants at these seminars discussed the new recommendations and their implementation, while also reserving sufficient time to discuss the issues raised at the Global Forum, especially the linking of trade and other economic statistics. In Beijing, special attention was given to the topic of trade in value added and its measurement. The new recommendations of IMTS 2010 were also discussed at a regional workshop, which was jointly organized with the secretariat of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and held in Lusaka, in November 2010.

E. Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics

A vision for trade statistics and the integration of trade and business statistics

14. At its recent meetings, the Task Force focused on the following issues: implementation of IMTS 2010 and the need to develop the Compilers Manual. There was also a discussion, initiated by the World Trade Organization at the 23 and 24 March 2010 meeting of the Task Force in Beirut and pursued further by the Statistics Division and Eurostat during the preparations of the Global Forum on Trade Statistics, of economic globalization resulting from the geographical fragmentation of the production chains. The emerging need to further develop trade statistics so as to enable better measurement of trade and global production was recognized. In this context and as part of the preparations of the Global Forum, several members of the Task Force agreed on a joint background note dated January 2011 entitled "International trade information systems in 2020" (Vision 2020),[9] which formulated concrete goals for the future of trade statistics, including the integration of statistics of trade in goods and services, and the linking of trade with other economic, social, environment and financial statistics.

15. The Task Force and its members provided relevant inputs to the work of other groups. For instance, the Task Force provided comments on the guide on "The Impact of globalization on national accounts", which had been prepared by a group of experts convened by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) with the support of OECD and Eurostat. The Task Force also contributed to the work on trade indices, as it had participated in recent years in the development of the *Export and Import Price Index Manual*. Over the coming years, the Task Force will

[9] Ibid.

continue this work centring on further developments in the area of external trade indices and the use of unit values and trade prices.

16. A very important joint ongoing effort of the Task Force concerns the common data set (CDS), which aims to reconcile the time series on merchandise trade statistics using international standards as a benchmark.[10] The common data set is updated once a year, in the period from October to November. The Task Force noted the need to improve ease of use of the common data set, and to add other features, such as regional groupings (pre-set or dynamic) and other user-defined aggregates.

III. Overview of the revised compilation guidance

17. The cornerstone of the Statistics Division's action plan for the implementation of IMTS 2010 is the update of the Compilers Manual. The Manual contains further and more detailed explanations of certain recommendations and provides practical guidance for compilers by describing good or best practices applicable under different circumstances. The structure of the new IMTS Compilers Manual is largely similar to that of the original 2004 *Compilers Manual* with needed updates which (a) incorporate guidance on the implementation of new recommendations and supportive suggestions contained in IMTS 2010 and (b) reflect new or updated country practices. The IMTS Compilers Manual, following the logic of the data compilation process, starts with the legal framework and data sources (part I). Part II covers the overall compilation process, while part III deals with compilation issues associated with specific data items and part IV with issues involving specific categories of goods. Dissemination issues are covered in part V on metadata and dissemination and external trade indices and seasonally adjusted data are examined in part VI.

Part I: Legal framework and data sources

18. Compared with the corresponding text in the previous Manual, this part provides more detailed information on the establishment and maintenance of a legal framework within which trade statistics are collected, compiled and disseminated, and on the relevant data sources, with country examples. It builds on and supports the new recommendations contained in IMTS 2010 regarding institutional arrangements and data sources.

Part II: Data compilation

19. Part II covers core issues associated with the compilation of merchandise trade statistics. Most of the information is new. Among the topics covered are institutional arrangements, integration of data from different sources, data processing, data quality and the integration of trade with business statistics.

Part III: Compilation of particular data items

20. Part III describes the compilation of particular data items such as time of recording, commodity classification, valuation, partner country, quantity information and mode of transport. Special emphasis is placed on the compilation of the new

[10] More information can be obtained from the website of the World Trade Organization at http://imits.wto.org/task_e.htm.

data fields introduced through IMTS 2010, such as second partner country, valuation of imports free on board, mode of transport and customs procedure code.

Part IV: Compilation of data on trade in selected categories of goods

21. Part IV covers compilation of data for certain categories of goods, such as goods for processing, goods in intra-firm trade, ships and aircraft, and electricity, gas, oil and water, that are either difficult to compile or difficult to identify separately. Some of these categories of goods remain difficult to capture for many countries; in this regard, guidance and examples of the good practices of countries are provided.

Part V: Metadata and dissemination; and part VI: External trade indices and seasonally adjusted data

22. Part V describes the contents of metadata for merchandise trade statistics and provides advice, with examples, on how to present and disseminate the metadata; under the topic of dissemination, additional guidance, with examples, on topics such as confidentiality, revision policy and use of technology is provided. Part VI offers informative introductory material, including some examples, for compilers of merchandise trade statistics. Detailed information on these topics was not included in the previous Compilers Manual.

IV. Programme for the further implementation of IMTS 2010

A. Increasing the usefulness of international merchandise trade statistics

23. The goal of the implementation of IMTS 2010 is to not only continue to provide international comparable high-quality merchandise trade statistics, but also increase the relevance of trade statistics as a central data source for the analysis of globalization. The first step towards achieving these objectives will be the implementation in respect of the new data items of IMTS 2010, namely, mode of transport, second partner country for imports and exports, imports on a f.o.b. basis in addition to imports c.i.f. (cost, insurance, freight), and the identification of certain trade transactions via customs procedure codes, which will lead to a better understanding of globalization and international trade practices.

24. The second step will entail the linking of trade with business statistics, which opens up the possibility of obtaining trade-related information in many new contexts without increasing the burden on data providers. For example, linking trade and business statistics allows for the analysis of the impact of trade on employment, wages and economic development at national and subnational levels. Another important element in respect of the implementation of IMTS 2010 is the further integration of statistics on trade in goods and services. The Statistics Division is committed to working on these issues in accordance with the conclusions of the Global Forum on Trade Statistics (see sects. II.D and II.E).

B. Completion of the Compilers Manual and its further development: continued involvement of the Expert Group

25. The Compilers Manual will be completed during 2012 and then submitted for translation and publication. After submission of the manuscript, it is expected that, as new and additional information emerges over time, the description of and guidance on certain issues covered in the Manual will be further improved. Therefore, the Statistics Division plans to establish a website for the updated IMTS Compilers Manual to ensure the continued improvement of the information provided on the various topics. It is expected that more examples and best practices will be added. Further, the establishment of a hotline to field questions on conceptual and compilation issues, and the use of other tools such as e-learning, are being considered. Another important consideration concerns the provision of practical guidance on the calculation of external trade indices that extends beyond what is provided in the IMTS Compilers Manual. The Statistics Division will consult with countries on their specific needs in this respect.

26. To achieve further progress on the implementation programme, the Statistics Division will rely on continued involvement of and contributions from the Expert Group. In this regard, it has been suggested that the terms of reference of the Expert Group be updated so as to reflect future activities and that there be periodic reports back to the Statistical Commission on the work of the Expert Group (see annex for the updated terms of reference).

C. Technical assistance

27. The Statistics Division is committed to continuing its technical assistance activities, which entail a series of regional workshops and seminars for developing countries focusing on the content of the new recommendations and on practical approaches to their implementation. It is tentatively planned to continue holding two workshops per year and deliver training to the countries that need it most, subject to resource availability. It is expected that some members of the Expert Group and of the Task Force will participate in such workshops as resource persons and share, in that capacity, their country's or their organization's experiences.

D. Upgrade of UN Comtrade

28. An important activity associated with the implementation of the new IMTS recommendations will be the upgrade by 2013-2014 of UN Comtrade in order to accommodate and to disseminate the new data items. An important component of the upgrade of UN Comtrade will entail the collection and dissemination of monthly and quarterly data, for which a pilot collection and processing system and an initial test dissemination have been established. In addition, the Statistics Division will further strengthen its knowledge base on trade statistics and its function as provider of metadata.

E. Future research agenda and international cooperation

29. IMTS 2010 and the IMTS Compilers Manual address many issues, several of which are being addressed for the first time in a manual designed for international dissemination. However, certain issues require further research and some issues are beyond the scope of international recommendations and the Compilers Manual. The issues that require further attention include: (a) imbalances in partner statistics, (b) the need for further innovative methods of linking trade and business statistics in the context of an integrated approach to economic statistics, (c) researching ways to assess trade in terms of value added and to clarify the nature of the international production chain, (d) good practices in the compilation of the trade indices and various analytical indicators and (e) identifying possible means of providing better-quantity information.

30. Recognizing the importance of providing more and better information on global trade, the Statistics Division will promote an active exchange of information on best practices, on new or revised classifications, on developments in global processes, and on new research and new publications and reports. The Division is committed to improving this flow of information exchange using its own websites, including the website for the Global Forum on Trade Statistics and the individual websites of the Division's Trade Statistics Branch related to the subject areas of international merchandise trade statistics and statistics of international trade in services. In this respect, the Division's activities will also include the continuing work of both the Expert Group and the Task Force and the promotion of an effective exchange of ideas, and cooperation with statisticians and researchers in related statistical domains.

V. Conclusions

31. This report offers a response to the requests made by the Statistical Commission at its forty-first session held in 2010. In particular, the following elements can be highlighted:

(a) The *International Merchandise Trade Statistics Compilers Manual, Rev.1*, has been prepared;

(b) There was a continuation of technical assistance activities on International Merchandise Trade Statistics, including a training workshop and two regional seminars;

(c) Special attention has been given in the updated IMTS Compilers Manual and during the training activities to the importance of improved institutional arrangements;

(d) The joint meetings between the Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics and the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services were continued in 2010 and 2011;

(e) The Statistics Division has taken steps towards upgrading its UN Comtrade database, which will include the collection and dissemination of monthly and quarterly trade data;

(f) The Global Forum on Trade Statistics gave due consideration to emerging trade policy needs and globalization issues and explicitly requested that the linking of trade statistics with business statistics be improved. The Global Forum also presented the findings of studies of trade in terms of value added.

32. The Commission is invited to take note of this report.

Annex

Updated terms of reference of the United Nations Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics*

1. The United Nations Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics has been established to:

(a) Provide guidance on the implementation of the revised recommendations contained in IMTS 2010 pursuant to their adoption by the Statistical Commission;

(b) Assist in the development of further compilation guidance.

2. The United Nations Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics will be convened by the United Nations Statistics Division.

3. The United Nations Statistics Division, in its capacity as the convener of the United Nations Expert Group on International Merchandise Trade Statistics, will submit to the Statistical Commission periodic progress reports on the revision process and the implementation of the revised recommendations.

* The text of the previous terms of references is contained in document E/CN.3/2008/10, annex.